VOLUME VI, NUMBER 4, FALL 2006

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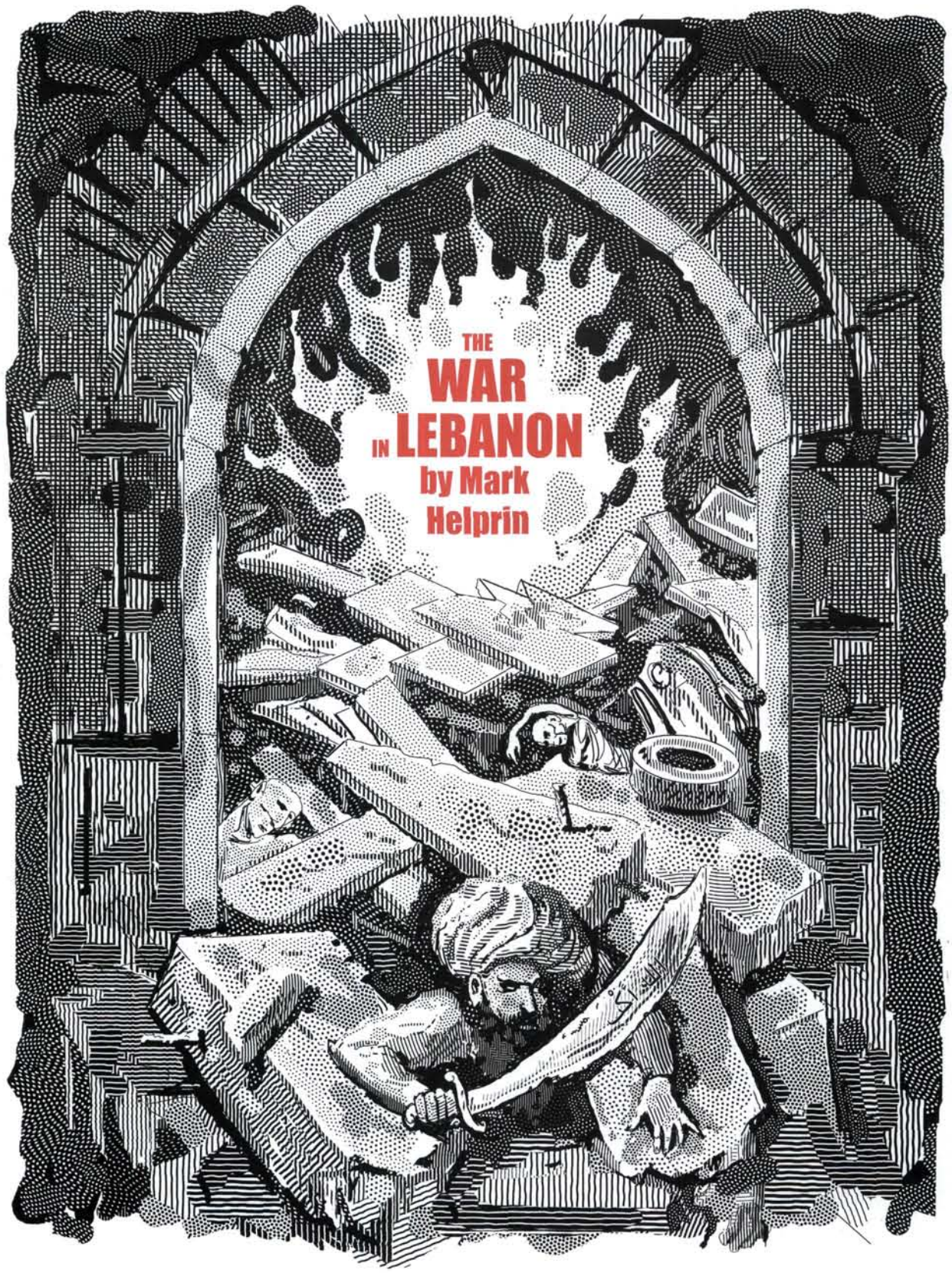

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Our Predicament

by Charles R. Kesler

In his Oval Office address on September 11, President Bush emphasized that this solemn anniversary entailed more than private loss or grief. By restoring, in effect, the emotional backdrop to the current war, the day reminded us of why we fight. With a becoming directness, he appealed for our resolve to fight on, not for closure.

His moral clarity—and his stubborn fealty to it—are the president's most endearing traits. They are rare in politicians today, and we should be grateful. But his brimming moral confidence, married to a management style that leads him to boast that, as president, he doesn't have to explain anything to anybody, has led him into a predicament from which he seems unable to extricate his administration, or our country. The problem in his foreign policy is not a shortage of notions about right and wrong, or freedom and democracy. The problem is too many contradictory and undigested ones.

On the subject of terrorism, for example, he blames the United States for contributing to the surge of radical Islamism in the Middle East because for decades, for the sake of stability, we supported the region's undemocratic governments. As a result, a generation of young Muslims, beset by "stagnation and despair," grew up "with little hope to improve their lives, and many fell under the sway of radical extremism." He explained to the national convention of the American Legion that "the lack of freedom in the Middle East made the region an incubator for terrorist movements." His solution is to democratize the place, beginning with Iraq. "Dissidents with the freedom to protest around the clock are less likely to blow themselves up during rush hour."

And yet...Bush is clear that "on 9/11, our nation saw the face of evil." He knows that Mohammed Atta and the other mass murderers are not to be pitied or shielded from their evil-doing because they had had poor educations, no chance to join street protests, or too little midnight basketball. In fact, Atta and many of the rest had had advanced educations and, residing in the West, plenty of exposure to democratic freedom and opportunity. Their joyful adherence to "a totalitarian ideology," a "perverted version of Islam," was as much a protest against modern democracy as against Middle Eastern despotism. In fact, they favored a much more thoroughgoing regime of despotism than the region's secularist rulers had ever devised.

Bush leaves his audience, and his government, wondering. Do terrorists long for freedom, or tyranny? Is evil the result of deprivation, or delight? Is tyranny a temporary detour from history, which is hurtling towards global democracy, or a permanent temptation of human nature, certain to be around, in some form, as long as politics is?

Our military posture in the Middle East suffers a similar confusion. The president insists on victory in Iraq, but under pressure from competing advisors or ideas he has defined victory down. In his Second Inaugural, he promised to stand with unfree peoples as they rose up against their masters. Yet for a long time, he has promised too that "as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." The images clash, and not merely the images. Victory over our foes in combat has yielded to a new account of victory: planting a democratic regime, which it will be up to the Iraqis themselves to sustain.

Just as insistently, however, he warns that our security at home is increasingly dependent on liberty's flourishing abroad, especially in Iraq. Our security thus depends increasingly on developments overseas that we admit we can't control. The administration's quandary is reflected in its strategic paralysis. It can't reduce the number of our troops in Iraq, but it won't increase them, either. We can't afford to lose, but we don't seem willing or witting enough to win.

It would help, of course, if the Iraqi government would stand up with its own army. At present we are in the awkward position of fighting for *their* democracy, which, to paraphrase Groucho Marx, is more than they ever did. But the Iraqi "unity government," as Bush calls it, is not designed to empower a strong executive who might build and wield the army on behalf of the nation. In fact, the "unity government" is designed precisely to make that impossible. Structured by proportional representation so that power and responsibility are nicely splintered, it is rigged against any sort of very energetic administration. And so its officials huddle in the Green Zone, trying to reconcile contradictions.

It's increasingly unlikely that the Bush Administration will be able to straighten out this tangle. The Democrats are too busy deploring Bush to think through the difficulties, either. That leaves the GOP's presidential contenders in 2008. If America is to sustain a coherent foreign and military policy for the Long War, one of those candidates may be our best hope. Would someone like to begin the conversation?

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CORRESPONDENCE

Respecting the Minutemen

In his latest *CRB* column ("Migrant Thoughts," Summer 2006), Mark Helprin objects to the "febrile militia of Willie Nelson look-alikes" and "armed geezers," presumably referring to the Minutemen who have attracted much attention in the press since their month-long border-watch project in April 2005.

The Minutemen are retired men and women who have the time and the means for such volunteer activities. The ones I've spoken with come from the broad middle class: businessmen, school administrators, engineers, policemen, and professional military personnel. They are deeply respectful of the law and regard themselves as a volunteer neighborhood watch group, recognizing and abiding by all the constraints that that implies. In fact, it was their unhappiness with the massive violation of American immigration law and the government's unwillingness under two administrations to do anything about it that brought these citizens to the border in the first place. The organizers and supervisors of the project drew up a strict plan of operation that all volunteers were required to follow. Those who violated it were sent away.

Many observers have commented on the importance of volunteerism in this country. The Minutemen are only one example of that basic American trait. Of course too much can be made of all this, and like anything else the project could go wrong, although that has not happened yet. The kind of civic participation that the Minutemen and other volunteer border-watch groups represent should be recognized for what it is, namely, the right of citizens to assemble and to petition their government, in this case through lawful support for enforcing our borders. Their concerns are shared by some 80% of the American people who want proper border control and meaningful enforcement of our immigration laws. Helprin is correct when he writes that immigration policy should be made by the whole population. For that reason, the Minutemen, whose views are so representative, have a rightful place in the national debate over how to deal with out-of-control illegal immigration, and their efforts should be respected.

Glynn Custred
California State University, East Bay
East Bay, CA

Mark Helprin replies:

Professor Custred has proved in his civil letter to me that he is remarkably tolerant, perhaps too much so. I'm sure that the Minutemen are in the main (with the exception of the simple nativists and racists whom they cannot fail to attract) fine people, like Willie Nelson himself. But they are, like the Black Panthers or the American Indian Movement, an armed group outside the direction of representative government, which, despite its many failings, still functions and still maintains as it should a monopoly of organized force. As correct as is the Minutemen's desire that our borders should be impervious to illegal entry, their methods are objectionable. We are not Somalia or Lebanon, and do not need a militia for every cause.

Further, as much as they may properly embarrass the government for failing in its responsibilities, they cannot, do not, and will not seal the border, and yet they create the impression that someone is taking care of the problem. The Black Panthers, too, claimed that the government had failed them, and they had a famous and innocuous free breakfast program to distract from the heart of the matter, which was their guns. Because of their ersatz military structure, even they, as menacing as they could be, could not escape the air of an "I hate girls club." In this, the Minutemen far outdo them, and are an embarrassing impediment to those of their beliefs that deserve consideration.

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Compassionate Conservatism

Andrew Busch admirably lays out the case against one variant of compassionate conservatism that could be called "politically-motivated compassionate conservatism" or P.C. conservatism for short ("After Compassionate Conservatism," Summer 2006). But he's incorrect to suggest that compassionate conservatism in theory is against limited government.

Compassionate conservatism, at least as it developed from 1989 to 1999, was profoundly decentralizing. It was a way to shrink the federal government by removing welfare functions from it and emphasizing what individuals and voluntary associations can and should do. Busch pits compassionate conservatism against "Gingrich-Dole Republicans," but Newt Gingrich was the doctrine's biggest backer in 1995, seeing it rightly as a way to begin demolishing the welfare state.

Similarly, Busch's concern is right but his generalization is too sweeping when he writes that "compassionate conservatism has foreclosed the use of a number of hard-edged issues (like welfare reform re-authorization) that could have given Republicans considerable traction against recalcitrant Democrats." Maybe P.C. conservatism has, but compassionate conservatism was key to getting Congress to pass hard-edged welfare reform legislation in 1996.

Busch is more accurate when he states near the end of his article that compassionate conservatism (he's finally dealing with the principles and not just the politicized practice) and the older conservatism "have numerous policies in common. These include tax cuts, privatization, and choice provisions in government programs, encouragement of voluntarism, and an alliance with social conservatism."

His roadmap is also right: Republicans can unite on a compassionate conservative platform that limits government by promoting the vitality of civil society and creating greater choice within existing public programs. Such a platform can also gain support among blacks and Hispanics by emphasizing moral and religious standards as well as entrepreneurship.

Marvin Olasky
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

Andrew E. Busch replies:

I appreciate Professor Olasky's letter. I believe that any apparent disagreement between his position and mine disappears as soon as it becomes clear that the real object of my criticism was not an abstract, pre-Bush Administration vision of

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"compassionate conservatism," but what he refers to as the "politically-motivated" version practically implemented since 2001. He is right to point to Newt Gingrich's and others' embrace of an earlier conception in the mid-1990s. My point about Gingrich was that Bush's version of compassionate conservatism has been powerfully driven by a desire to overcome the public impression of the Gingrich Republicans as too hard-nosed, a point that is actually consistent with Olasky's appraisal (i.e., that Gingrich's version of compassionate conservatism *was* more hard-nosed than Bush's). Indeed, though Olasky does not mention it, Ronald Reagan himself proposed several aspects of the purer pre-Bush idea, including an emphasis on voluntarism, school vouchers, the earned income tax credit, and a work-based tough-love approach to welfare reform.

The problem about which I wrote, and on which Professor Olasky agrees, is that "compassionate conservatism" since 2001 has been applied in a manner that has drained it of fiscal discipline and any noticeable commitment to limited government. A problem that neither Olasky nor I addressed, but which is worthy of thoughtful consideration, is whether the very language of "compassionate conservatism" boxes conservatives in too much. It seems likely that it does. When a conservative is determined to preserve a vigorous emphasis on limited government, he is skewered for being "uncompassionate"; when Bush, for one, is determined to avoid being skewered, he feels he can only do so by surrendering large pieces of the playing field, including the emphasis on limited government. In any event, President Bush's formula—both his full policy mix and the "compassionate conservative" label that is by now inextricably, if unfortunately, connected to that mix—is unlikely to be adopted by leading Republicans in 2008, for sound reasons. Still, Prof. Olasky's pre-Bush ideal, which matches well with the amalgam I proposed, might be advanced under a different name.

Evangelicals and the American Creed

Peter Lawler's excellent review of Bernard-Henri Lévy's *American Vertigo* spoke clearly to the relation between Americans' religion and their politics ("Where's the Love?" Summer 2006). As he put it, "In our country, citizens can quite reasonably find themselves equally at home with their country's ennobling political creed and with their church's tenets, from which they learn that man's home is somewhere else."

Without taking issue with Lawler's thesis, I would like to shed some light on it borne of practical experience and reflection. In and out of church, Evangelicals' speeches and deeds differ as the differing venues and circumstances require, but they also overlap, reminding one that there are real limits to how far they are willing to go to maintain the political creed. I mean that in church there is, not surprisingly, little talk of politics, and outside of church, while there is more talk of politics, church talk predominates, at least when small talk does not.

The Evangelicals I know, for the most part, watch Fox News and listen to Rush Limbaugh, but they also are taken in by the likes of the fire-breathing Michael Savage. This points up the necessity of political, in some cases, philosophical, education to provide the necessary correctives to unbalanced political commentary. Evangelicals read their Bible but often nothing else, unless it is the work of poorly informed Christian commentators who carelessly misrepresent the American Founders as Evangelicals.

Evangelicals believe that salvation of one's soul takes precedence over salvation of the world, and make little or no distinction be-

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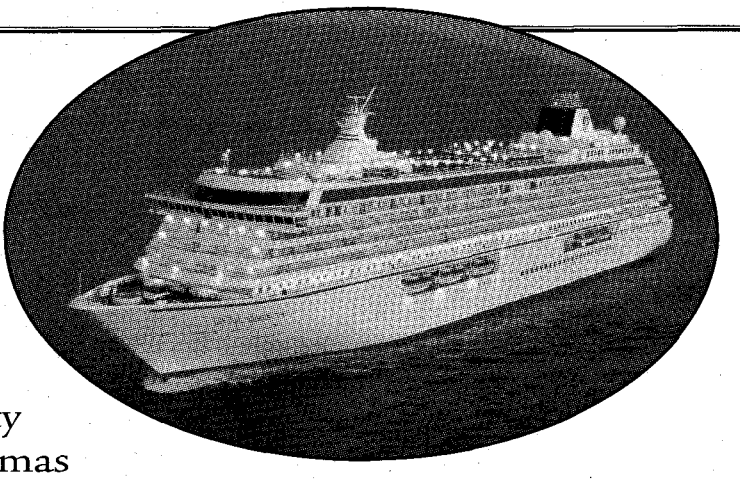

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tween dealing effectively here and now with pressing problems (a moderate goal) and removing all political evils from the world (a utopian goal). That is, "the world" is indiscriminately condemned, notwithstanding the biblical passage that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," and other passages that teach that God did not come into the world to condemn it. But the apocalyptic vision in general and the Book of Revelation in particular incline Evangelicals to look beyond the current crisis to the ultimate one, wherein the Lord's purposes finally will be fulfilled.

The virtue of America is that it is a continual education in self-government, a nation in which individuals and their families and friends must make practical decisions daily for their own well being, rather than consigning that responsibility to a universal church or nanny state. However much these believers rightly seek divine guidance in their personal lives—even to the most minute detail at times—still they are making decisions based on their own gifts. Whether the tension resolves itself one way or the other depends, as everything in political life does, on the quality of political leadership that God, in His wisdom, chooses to provide for us.

Richard Reeb
Helendale, CA

Indian History

At the risk of nit-picking, I would like to make a couple of small comments regarding Bruce Thornton's kind review of my book, *1491* ("New World, Old Myths," Summer 2006).

First, I did not "endorse" Henry Dobyns's very high estimate of 90-112 million for the Americas' native population in 1492, which few researchers accept. Instead I tried to explain why most anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers, and historians now believe that the population was much higher than previously thought, even if they can't give an exact number. Until the 1960s most scientists tended to believe that the tally was about 10 million. Typical figures now are 40-60 million, but the precise number is less important than the recognition that these much larger populations almost certainly had to have been more sophisticated than had been thought—you can't have an egalitarian band of hunters and gatherers with 100,000 members. My apologies if this was not clear enough in the book.

Second, I did not claim that the Iroquois inspired the U.S. system of government—in fact, I explicitly argued that "this assertion seems implausible...the Constitution as originally enacted was sharply different from the Great Law" (the Iroquois code of government, which even the most skeptical anthropologists believe, *pace* Thornton, more than "remotely resembl[es] a 'constitution'"). Rather, I was presenting a hypothesis about cultural influence. The suggestion may be wrong, but it was not the one criticized in the review.

Finally, Thornton asks, "Why were the Spaniards in Tenochtitlán, and not the Aztecs in Seville?" The answer is complex, as I hope I suggest in my book. One factor was the undoubted European advantage in maritime technology—no society in Mesoamerica had vessels that could go as far as the Spanish caravelles. That disparity clearly explains, at least in part, why no Indians sailed to Seville. The European triumph at Tenochtitlán, by contrast, seems to me to be attributable primarily to disease. Natives were able to compensate for Spanish steel and horses, though often at terrible cost. What they could not fight was Spanish germs.

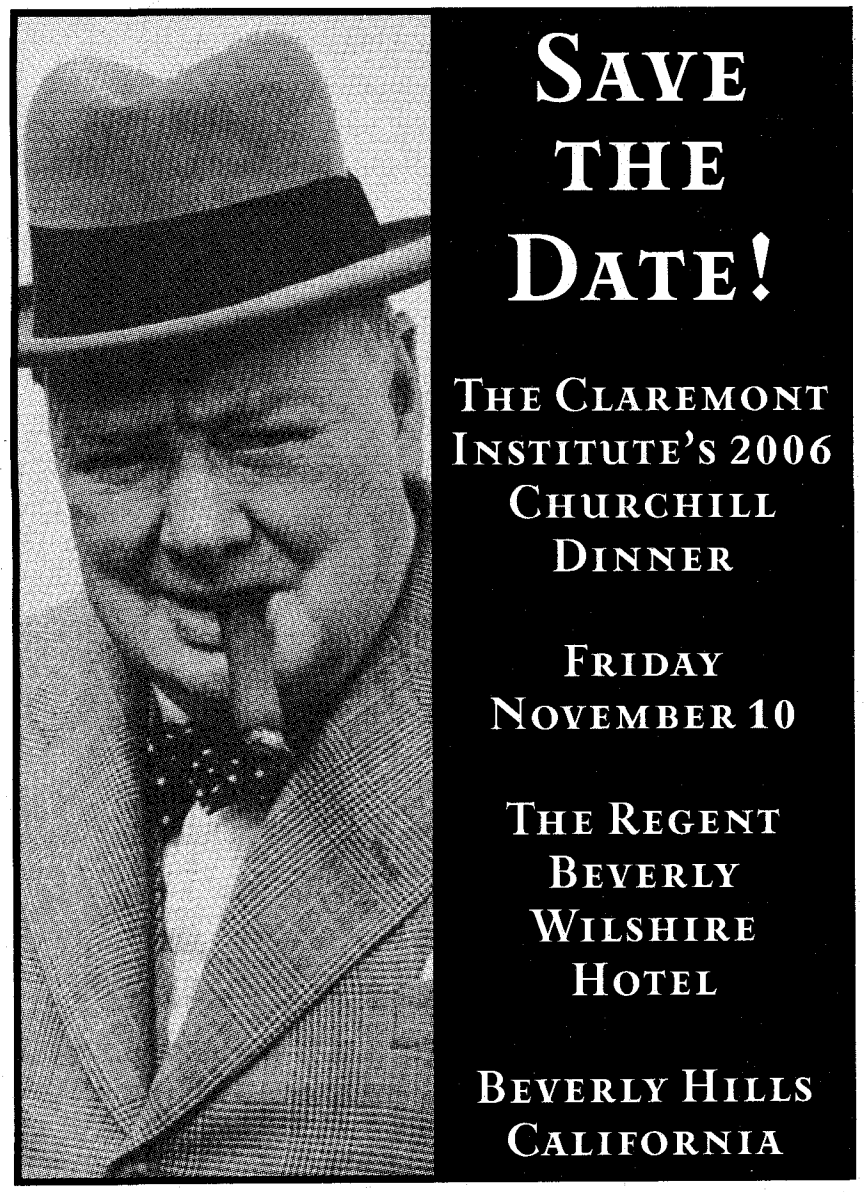
Charles C. Mann
Amherst, MA

Bruce S. Thornton replies:

I apologize to Charles Mann for saying he "endorses" Henry Dobyns's high estimate for Indian populations in the pre-contact Americas. My mistake. As for his other points, I stand by my comments. I summarized, I believe correctly, Mann's claim that "the Iroquois League provided the colonists with a model of 'limited government and personal autonomy.'" I still find this unconvincing for the reasons stated in the review. De facto freedom and equality, the consequence of primitive cultural conditions, are much different from de jure freedom and equality that result from people thinking and writing critically about these concepts and then creating written constitutions, offices, electoral protocols, procedures, and laws that embody them. As Plato said, thieves divvy up their loot equally, but that's not the same thing as constitutional government. Finally, disease does not explain Cortez's conquest. Cortez and his Spaniards could have been wiped out on numerous occasions, including on La Noche Triste. But the Aztecs were bound by traditional cultural practices they could not discard or adapt until too late, whereas the Spaniards were constantly adapting to new circumstances and willing to try anything to achieve their aims. That intellectual dynamism and initiative, not germs or pigs, explains the triumph of the West and its ways.

Duty, Honor, Country

In E. Christian Kopff's review of Victor Davis Hanson's *A War Like No Other*, he mistakenly states that General MacArthur's "Duty, Honor, Country" speech was improvised ("Battlewise History," Summer 2006). That was not the case. MacArthur had been working on the remarks for some time. Moreover, recent research has determined that the attribution of the famous quotation to Plato was



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incorrect. Reviews of Plato's work have failed to locate that statement. Instead, the first time it was apparently used was many years later by George Santayana. (Jack Wheeler, who currently works in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, was the researcher who identified this misattribution.)

Steve Grove
United States Military
Academy Historian
West Point, NY

Postmodern Bedtime Stories

Dorothea Israel Wolfson's review of *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature* put in words something that had been bothering me for some time (Let Sleeping Beauties Lie," Summer 2006). Somehow, we have collectively decided that there is no innocence left in childhood, so it is therefore okay to expose children to everything with absolutely no filters. I vehemently disagree with this viewpoint.

The editors of this anthology who want to condemn the fairy princesses and dragon-slaying heroes as oppressive to children may not realize that it is because the world is such a crazy, mixed-up place (and always has been) that we need flights of fancy and fodder for the imagination. We don't create or propagate fairy tales to oppress minorities or to keep the status quo. Although many fairy tales are credited to male authors, they are usually founded in stories with long oral traditions with many cultural variations, shared by mothers and fathers alike through the ages.

My mother always said, "You are what you read." I guess that makes my daughter a princess with abnormally long hair, and my son a knight with special dolphin-swimming powers. Until the next trip to the library, that is.

Gennifer Chenault
Ashburn, VA

Plato's Literalism

I am grateful to Eva Brann for her review of my book, *Plato's* Republic: *A Study* ("Plato's Impossible Polity," Summer 2006). Because there is not space for a lengthy exchange of views on the *Republic*, I restrict myself to one or two central points. Brann seems to misinterpret my view of Socratic honesty. It is not for me a universal axiom, as she seems to think, that "Socrates means what he says" or that we must always take him literally. I rather suggest that he means to assert the intractability of the problem of justice, unless men and women are assigned roles in the polity commensurate with their talents, the family is dissolved, the rulers are restricted to those of superior intelligence, and "noble" or "medicinal" lies are inculcated into the citizens' souls. Perhaps most important is that there is no freedom to philosophize: the philosopher-kings are, as it were, all Platonists. I believe that Brann would agree that there is plenty of scope in such a city for doubting that Socrates means what he says. My underlying hypothesis is that the same steps required to obtain justice lead directly to injustice. Furthermore, the undesirability of enforcing the steps enumerated is so obvious that some explanation must be found for starting on this path in the first place. If the explanation is simply to discredit extremism, why not begin with a moderate political teaching, and in particular, with that of Aristotle? In other words, what is the point to Platonic extremism if not to show that reason and justice are intrinsically self-vitiating when applied to politics? When philosophy is granted citizenship, it sooner or later degenerates into ideology. Unfortunately, if philosophy is not granted citizenship, then human life becomes a farce. Finally, the attempt to "civilize" Platonism or to reduce Platonic madness to Aristotelian sobriety is like the attempt to learn about human nature through a reduction of Dostoyevsky to Jane Austen. That is, the *Republic* is not a political work at all, but a portrait of human nature, a portrait consisting of a cascade of likenesses (to use a term correctly introduced by Professor Brann). Plato's cave is not a likeness of the city, but rather of the human soul. Lest I be accused of Nietzschean pathos, I note that my teacher, Leo Strauss, attributed to Nietzsche the deepest description of the nature of the philosopher known to him.

Stanley Rosen
Boston University
Boston, MA

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THE WAR IN LEBANON

Essay by Mark Helprin

IMAGINE AN ISRAELI GUERRILLA ORGANIzation based in the Galilee, a power unto itself, with seats in the cabinet, a generous welfare apparatus, and the oft-stated goal of Lebanon's destruction and replacement with a Jewish state governed by Jewish religious law. Upon instructions from its foreign patron and supplier of arms, it crosses the border to capture and kill some Lebanese soldiers. Lebanon, however, is in no mood to tolerate such a provocation, especially in light of the guerrillas' arsenal of 10,000 or so short-range missiles targeted at Lebanese civilians.

For a month, the Lebanese air force ranges freely over all of Israel, and, without losing a single plane, cuts every major bridge and road link in the country, destroys its power plants, bombs ports, airports, military facilities associated with the guerrillas, and the guerrillas themselves, obliterating all but their buried infrastructure. Significant portions of Tel Aviv and Haifa, and many of the small towns of Israel's north, are reduced to rubble.

With the loss of four sailors and minor damage to a frigate, the Lebanese navy blockades Israel's coasts with 100% effectiveness. More than a thousand Israelis are killed, four times that number wounded, and a quarter of the Jewish guerrillas slain in combat. Because the guerrillas choose to fire their rockets amid the civilian population, the homes of almost a million Jews are razed by the Lebanese air force, the Israeli economy comes to a halt, foreigners are evacuated, and the world looks on in horror.

Meanwhile, its own economy humming, Lebanon deploys in the battle zone on average less than 2% of its army, of which 118 fall in combat. Thirty-nine Lebanese die in the Israeli guerrillas' barrage of 4,000 missiles, a kill rate of less than 1%. Lebanon is able to destroy more than 3,000 of the remaining 6,000 missiles, including almost all those of greater range, putting to rest the guerrillas' threat to attack Beirut.

The guerrillas and their supporters repeatedly beg for a cease-fire. The Israeli prime minister cries that his country has been destroyed, and weeps on camera. Israel is blockaded by sea, its other links to the world cut at will by the Lebanese air force. The Lebanese army remains in key positions in the north of the country, and the world's powers, great and small, sympathetic and not, look on both unwilling and unable to intervene, finally coming to Israel's aid only on the stated condition that Israel accept the presence of alien troops on its soil to disarm the guerrillas and protect Lebanon from further incursions.

Who won?

Unrealistic Expectations

TO REFLECT THE COMMON WISDOM IN regard to the real war that has just taken place in Lebanon, one would have to say, absurdly, that in the fictional example Israel won. For the whole world and Israel itself perceives a Hezbollah victory, even if in a blind test as above, the judgment most certainly would be different. This is explicable on many levels.

With the same kind of intellectual lethargy that led to the obligatory description of the proposed international force as *robust* (I hope never to hear the word again), people who do not pretend to knowledge of either the Arab-Israeli conflict or military affairs habitually declare that Israel is invincible. Insensitive to fact, variation, potential orders of battle, or the effects of nuclear weapons, they have been saying this since the Six-Day War of 1967. That war, the 100-hour 1956 Sinai Campaign, and the 1976 Entebbe operation are responsible for expectations that Israel produces miracles every time it takes to the field.

These decisive victories were a surprise to many, who were shocked that the Jews, whom the Russian Empire's Cantonist Decrees of the 19th century had subjected to 25 years or more compulsory military service, had a military tradition and could hold their own in battle. And thus the swing of the pendulum from irrational contempt to irrational awe.

Irrational because even in 1967, in a war that borders on the miraculous perhaps more than any other, the struggles for Jerusalem and the Golan were hard fought, costly, and closely run. Irrational because for Israel the 1948 War of Independence dragged on with high casualties and much destruction, and left it with borders that were a strategical nightmare. Irrational because the War of Attrition spanned several difficult years and brought Israel no gains whatsoever. Irrational because in the 1973 War Israel came perilously close to extinction. And irrational because none of the campaigns in Lebanon has been anything but slow and bloody, and collectively they have given birth not to miracles but to the Hezbollah garrison that in this war Israel was compelled to reduce.

Perhaps surprisingly, because now and then they pay for it dearly, the Israelis themselves are prone to the same unrealistic expectations. And in this war these were supercharged by their new prime minister, a man of civic rather than military affairs, who, when the most that could be achieved was Hezbollah's reduction,

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promised its destruction. Contrast this with the 1967 War, in which, in the words of Michael Oren,

> There was no thought of altering...[the] context fundamentally, of eliminating the possibility of similar wars erupting in the future. Rather, all Israel strove for was an end to the immediate threat, and for an indefinite period of quiet thereafter."

And that is all it got. No one may ever know what possessed Israel and the world to imagine after four decades of Fatah ineradicable, many years of Intifada, and the rise of Hamas, that it could in a single strike destroy an organically rooted terrorist organization, but this unreasonable elevation of its aim helps to explain the public's perception of the war.

Perhaps the most serious damage one can do to oneself in a military campaign is to fail to have a clear, disciplined, and consistent set of objectives. In reaching these, improvisation is the highest virtue. In defining them, it is the greatest sin. The lack of conceptual rigor and the resulting fluid and promiscuous adjustment and expansion of America's aims in Iraq have become a continuing tragedy. In a lesser sense, Israel has followed suit in Lebanon.

The war there is not, however, comparable to the war in Iraq. For three and a half years we have been trying to pacify and transform a country of 28 million, larger than California, and many thousand miles distant. The Israelis had a less ambitious objective in a contiguous territory the size of San Antonio, Texas, with perhaps 100,000 people left in it at the peak of hostilities that lasted a month. In Iraq, we expect to compel the lion to lie down with the lamb, and have rejected as inappropriate to our greatness merely holding our enemies at bay, and so, applying this template to the Israelis, we fault them for not fully eradicating theirs—as if they ever did, and as if they ever could. For you beat this strain of guerrilla neither by conversion nor elimination, but only with endurance, patience, an assiduous defense, and well executed punitive measures sometimes timed to enemy attacks and sometimes not.

To some extent we judge the war as we do because our view has been unduly influenced by enemies who feed joyfully on death and have unshakable confidence, while we are no longer certain of the justice of our self-defense. Thus, when Hezbollah says it has won a "historic" victory, large segments of European and American opinion that reflexively defer to hostile judgment, whether Soviet or Arab, simply acquiesce.

And yet Hezbollah is part of a people who claimed on the eve of the 1967 War that, "If the Sixth Fleet intervenes in our struggle...we have the power to turn it into a can of sardines"; who, as their armies were being slaughtered in Sinai, danced in the streets of Cairo; and who, after fleeing Kuneitra without a shot, called it the greatest military action in history, "even greater than the Russian defense of Stalingrad." Theirs is hardly a sober or disinterested assessment, and we have no reason to take them at their word.

Hezbollah has proved that it can survive an Israeli campaign of small scale and limited duration, but it has also proved that this can destroy Lebanon, and that 10,000 carefully accumulated "strategic" weapons—in the main, glorified artillery rounds—were during four weeks of engagement less potent than one suicide bomber.

Damage Report

Although efficiently lamented by many Israelis in interviews with the American press, the war's effect on the economy is not yet statistically apparent at the time of this writing, other than that, in July, exports of goods declined while exports of services grew, and the already thriving composite index of economic health actually advanced. Overall, the shut-downs, dislocations, and damage cannot have been major. The north outside Haifa is primarily yet thinly agricultural, and comprises many "unproductive" Arab villages, park lands, and rocky hills. Most crops were unaffected, and the region within range of (relatively) heavy bombardment accounts for only a small portion of Israel's agricultural production, which itself is only a few percent of GNP. Industrial facilities in the north other than in Haifa, whose heavy industry and refining completely escaped, are simultaneously just a fraction of Israel's capacity, highly dispersed, and unscathed. Tourism was set back, but the month of warfare probably had less effect on the economy as a whole—with its strong growth and remarkable technological thrust—than a traditional French August.

The *Washington Post*'s estimate of $1.3 billion in damage to infrastructure must be viewed vis-à-vis Israel's $120 billion GNP, and in sharp contrast to the Lebanese government's estimate of a $2.5 billion loss to its own GNP of less than $20 billion. Damage to Lebanon's south, Hezbollah's base, is proportionately far greater and of far greater import. For although Hezbollah has won the outward support of the carefully cultivated Shia in southern Lebanon, because it is a political organization more attentive to its constituents than was Tip O'Neill, as a practical matter it cannot subject them either often or soon to what they have just been through. Though Hezbollah has certainly galvanized the Arab street, galvanized no less are the Sunni regimes from the Gulf to Morocco, for whom a de facto Iranian mandate in Lebanon is of no small consequence. Hoping that the presence of the Lebanese army and an international force will discourage Israeli attack, Hezbollah must also deal with the possibility that these contingents, with the backing and encouragement of a naturally coalescing anti-Iranian front among most Arab states and Lebanon itself (in whose interest taming Hezbollah is paramount) may close down or heavily restrict arms traffic from Syria and the sea, and that its reconstitution will be fettered not only by Israeli action but by the planned 15,000 foreign troops. They may not be "robust," but they will be unpredictable.

Hezbollah will rearm, although to what extent is unknown, and one cannot count on the efforts of either Lebanon or the Sunni Arab states to suppress it. But given that its arsenal proved ineffective and that obtaining new weapons will be subject to varying degrees of local, international, and Israeli obstruction, the rearmament is not quite what popular fears suggest.

Israel's Strategy

If one accepts Hezbollah's self-description as a resistance movement, in which case one must, in light of the fact that Hezbollah never ceases to provoke, view Israel's mere existence as a continuing act of aggression, then Hezbollah has indeed shown that it can initiate conflict, resist, and survive. But survival is not its aim. Because by *resist* what it means is to destroy Israel, one must ask how much closer to its goal the war has brought it. The answer is that Israel faces many existential dangers, but Hezbollah has never been, and—with its arsenals depleted, a quarter of its fighters dead, and its supporters savaged—is not now one of them.

Israel, on the other hand, if it is realistic, aims not to destroy Hezbollah, for Hezbollah can recruit from a bottomless well, blend into the population, and take refuge beyond the Litani or beyond Lebanon itself. Unlike Hezbollah, Israel's more modest aim is to survive, and that it has done.

The notion that Israel was defeated flies below the level of war aims, the complications of regional politics, and long-term effects, and is born from the particularities of battle. The general opinion of a war, which is a very large thing, is at first formed by apprehension of the smallest details. And though at close range the many deficiencies of Israel's campaign may cumulatively suggest failure, even these have often been misjudged.

In the war's early days, when the prime minister met with military advisors who in reversal of the norm were mainly air force officers, it was clear that the campaign—under the direction of an air force general as chief of the general staff—would stress aerial bombardment.

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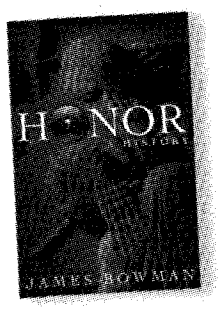
Honor: A History

By James Bowman
$25.95, ISBN 1594031428



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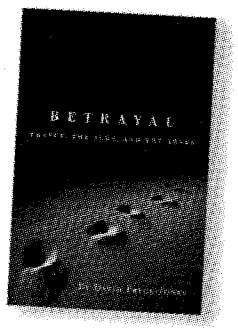
Betrayal:

FRANCE, THE JEWS, AND THE ARABS

David Pryce-Jones, October 2006
$23.95 ISBN 1-59403-151-7



David Pryce-Jones believes France has betrayed its own proud humanist values in respect to Arabs and Jews alike. One aim was to sponsor the Arabs' belief that they could be incorporated into a Franco-Arab power bloc. Simultaneously, France has permitted the immigration of Arabs and Muslims in numbers that call into question the country's character. In a brilliantly powerful display of literature, *Betrayal* explains how and why France has become such a danger to itself and to the West.

Finding the Target:

THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN MILITARY POLICY

by Frederick W. Kagan, September 2006
$29.95, ISBN 1-59403-150-9

Frederick Kagan has emerged as a leading figure in military analysts. In *Finding the Target,* he describes with unusual clarity the three basic transformations within the U.S. military since Vietnam. The balancing of these issues of transformation lead Kagan to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's vision of a "new" military; the conduct of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; and the disconnect between such grand strategic visions as the Bush Doctrine.

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The Israelis had had a decade to create with their many means of technical and traditional reconnaissance a detailed and comprehensive picture of the battlefield. This, combined with precision-guided munitions and small, focused raids, seemed appropriate to a highly dispersed, mobile, and well dug-in enemy. The object, a recurring theme in military history, was to avoid high Israeli casualties by relying upon machines instead of men. Hezbollah, however, was eager to fight amid and sacrifice its civilians, and the Israeli picture of the battle space was not what it should have been.

But the strategy was sound. Crossing enemy ground to a launch site, one can destroy everything in the way, as opposed to descending upon the objective from the air and keeping it in isolation. And pop-up targets don't wait around for armored columns to reach them. Had the army gone in en masse, the few thousand Hezbollah regulars would have taken refuge among the population or beyond the Litani, and to the extent that they would have stood their ground, the Israelis would have incurred far more casualties in the kind of "whack-a-mole" war that took place, and inflicted more on the civilians among whom Hezbollah hid, for more or less the same result: guerrillas melt away, but then filter back. The fault lay not in strategy but in extended toleration of Hezbollah's buildup. This very campaign four or five years ago would have looked much different. A subsequent campaign sooner rather than later, and dogged attention from the air until then, will also look different.

Looking to Iran

The lessons for Israel? Not to let things go for so long; to have a better picture of the battlefield (using, for example, ground-penetrating radar); to "up armor" its tanks; to adapt naval point defense systems that, once emplaced, are capable of bringing down "Katyushas" cheaply; to determine carefully, state publicly, and not depart from the aims of the campaign; to calibrate military action to the time limits imposed upon Israel in all its wars; better to inform the Lebanese and the world that Israel has no choice but to strike at missiles launched against it from residential areas if Hezbollah's will is to make Lebanon a free-fire zone; and to be prepared to deal with West Bank and Gaza variations of the Hezbollah technique. For example, the war has been a strong argument for continued Israeli control of the Jordan crossings and the sea and air approaches to a Palestinian state, lest Qassems become Katyushas, and as such is Iran's gift to the Palestinians of yet another setback.

The preeminent lesson is that Israel must create more of a margin of safety in its military operations. It has no alternative but to over-spend, over-prepare, over-fortify, over-stockpile, and over-train. And it must abandon permanently the hubris that arises in part from the world's Manichean view of it, in favor of a garrison mentality that befits its persistent vulnerability.

I believe that history will see that the essence of this war is that it has served as an exchange of messages and proofs in the prelude to an Islamic nuclear confrontation with the West. Nations can and often do speak to one another in a way that transcends the intent of even their highest authorities, and the question Iran has posed to Israel, the Muslims to the Jews, and the East to the West, is, What will you do if we open the door to Armageddon? Israel has provided the answer, and it reads quite simply. To an Iran that calls for its destruction and is proceeding headlong toward nuclear weapons, Israel has stated in the war in Lebanon that it will not go down alone.

This is not the subtext of the July war, it is the prime text. What one commentator after another termed the "disproportionate" destruction of Lebanon was indeed a message about proportion and intentions: that the three or four nuclear detonations in Israel which would be enough to destroy it will yield many, many times that number in Iran and possibly elsewhere. Iran is neither exclusively rational nor irrational, and as rash and determined as it may be, it is yet probing for information.

The United States, in overextending its forces, keeping a dangerous rein on military expenditures, and following Europe into the Russian-Chinese-Iranian diplomatic swamp, has partially answered Iran's query as to what it may do in regard to Iranian nuclear development. Even if in the unlikely event that the immediate Hezbollah provocation was not of Iranian origin, the question exists and Israel has addressed it. In light of Ahmadinejad's fanaticism, some doubt the utility of deterrent signals, but whether or not productive or even received, such signals must be sent, as they are fundamental to survival. And, then, counter to many impressions, Iran is in fact moving with some care.

Both it and Syria possess chemical and biological weapons, Iran's stockpiles being rich and varied. And yet not one of Hezbollah's 10,000 missiles capable of carrying a chemical or biological warhead was so equipped. Without guidance, they would not have achieved maximum impact, and merely turned the public relations battle on its head. But, more importantly, had they been used, they would have given Israel not only the occasion it does not need to attack Iranian nuclear facilities, but reason to attack Iran itself. Iran now knows exactly what kind of game it is in, and will calibrate its moves accordingly: perhaps emphasizing deception all the more, harden-

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ing its facilities as never before, or even reaching some sort of deal. Whatever it does, it has been unambiguously put on notice. The dense traffic in symbols and signals among proxies and principals, as in the conduct of the Cold War with a similar language and millions of casualties, has moved all parties closer to the denouement.

What that will be no one can say, but even without the use of nuclear weapons Israel is capable of the certain destruction of the Iranian nuclear project, and the clash in Lebanon, as much a pre-nuclear clarification as anything else, has brought it much closer to this than ever.

To judge the war solely according to its devastation (for which Hezbollah, deliberately sheltering missile launches against Israel among its own people, was entirely responsible and too little condemned), by its tactical efficiency, by numbers and metrics, in view of carelessly stated objectives, or in thrall of the compelling testimony of the participants and victims of both sides, is to overlook its greater import.

It was a war like most of Israel's wars rather than the few, and its egregious missteps beg for correction. But as Churchill said of a weak, 17th-century England that did not enjoy the wealth and power of the Victorians who condemned its immoralities in the affairs of state, "We had to keep ourselves alive and free, and we did so." Israel has lost the battle for public relations but achieved a number of necessary objectives—reducing the growing arsenal arrayed against its civil population, putting a large stick in the spokes of Hezbollah's wheels, perhaps buying a period of relative peace in the north, and holding Lebanon to account for grafting onto its political structure a Spartan state at war with Israel for the purpose of its destruction.

Existential Battles

TO THE IRANIAN DE FACTO DECLARATION to Israel, the Arabs, and the West that it possesses a belligerent outpost on the Mediterranean, Israel has weathered world condemnation to reply that the rent for this outpost is high and can be made higher. When Iran spoke to Israel in the language of war, Israel spoke back with absolute clarity even if not with the mythical brilliance attributed to it by friend and foe alike. Which is not to say that it is incapable of fighting the stunning existential battles that once it fought. For it is indeed capable of them, and they are yet to come.

Mark Helprin, who holds degrees from Harvard and Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, served in the Israeli infantry and Air Force, and as an advisor in defense and foreign relations to the American government. He is a senior fellow of the Claremont Institute.

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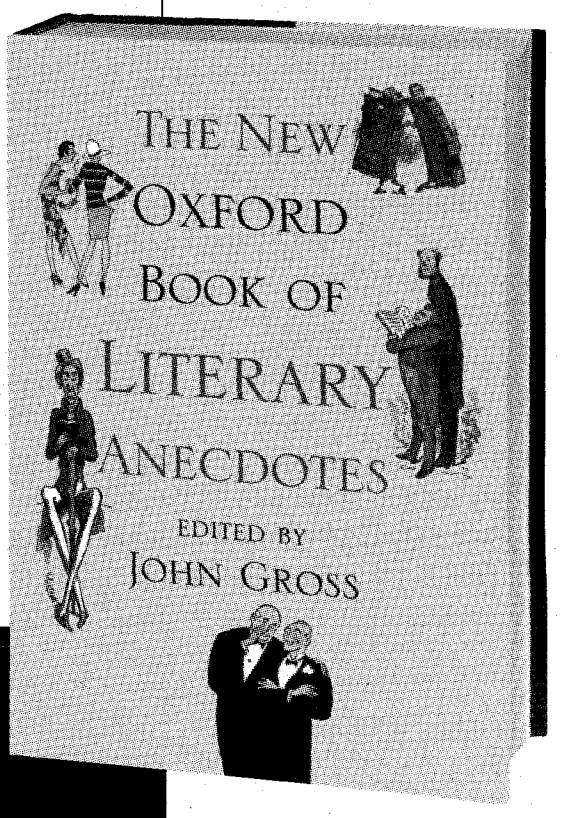

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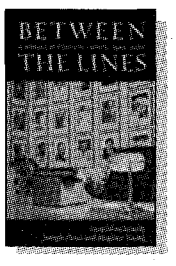

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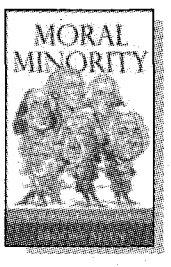

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Book Review by Theodore Dalrymple

Suicide of the West

While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West from Within, by Bruce Bawer. Doubleday, 256 pages, $23.95

Menace in Europe: Why the Continent's Crisis Is America's, Too, by Claire Berlinski. Crown Forum, 288 pages, $25.95 (cloth), $14.95 (paper)

Londonistan, by Melanie Phillips. Encounter Books, 200 pages, $25.95

That Western Europe suffers from a state of general paralysis is a truth too universally acknowledged to require much reiteration. Slow growth and high unemployment; an aging and shrinking population; scientific and cultural irrelevance to the rest of the world; a large, unassimilated alien population much of which is hostile to the very countries into which it has immigrated—these are just a few of the problems that Western Europe not only fails to solve, but even properly to recognize.

While Europe Slept, *Menace in Europe*, and *Londonistan* all deal with the European disease (if such a metaphor may be allowed for shorthand purposes), from slightly different perspectives. Bruce Bawer, an American writer resident in Norway, deals mainly with the threat of Islamism in northwestern Europe; Melanie Phillips, a distinguished British journalist, treats the specific case of Islamism in what might be called its international nerve center, London; and Claire Berlinski, an American writer living in Paris and Istanbul, analyzes the general state of the European psyche. Read in conjunction, they are far from reassuring.

The publishing history of *Londonistan* is by itself diagnostic of the European disease. Phillips claims that the British government and intellectual elite has been complicit in allowing the dangerous ideology of Islamism—which threatens the security not only of the British state, but of Europe and North America—to take deep root in Britain. The recent plot to blow up ten airliners en route from Britain to America appears to bear her out. Furthermore, an amalgam of cowardice, moral frivolity, lack of conviction, and political correctness (all of which are, of course, intimately interrelated) has ensured that almost every policy decision taken by the government has worsened the situation rather than ameliorated it. Phillips provides a lot of evidence for her claims, some of which (especially the words emanating from the mouths and pens of the hierarchs of the Church of England) would be funny if their pusillanimity were not so typical of the British establishment.

You might have thought such a book, written in clear English, would be snapped up by British publishers, especially as it has sold well in the United States. But it was turned down by all the major publishers in Britain, and eventually taken only by a very tiny house (Gibson Square Books, Ltd.). Its widespread rejections cannot be explained on narrow commercial grounds, or on purely literary ones: 200,000 books per year are published in Great Britain, not all of them by any means imperishable literary masterpieces or bestsellers. The only reasons that withstand scrutiny are precisely the ones that the author offers for the enfeebled stupidity of British government policy. In other words, we are dealing with a deep cultural problem, not just a problem of the wrong personnel being in charge. Mr Blair, in all his blustering faintheartedness, is unfortunately a true representative of his people.

Phillips's book, being the most narrowly focused, is the best-documented and freest of error. Both Bawer and Berlinski sometimes let their rhetoric run away with them. For example, in order to counter a Norwegian's condescension about America's contribution to the world, Bawer lists American inventions and discoveries, quite a few of which, unfortunately, were not American.

The dangers of painting with a broad brush are that nuances may easily be brushed out. Bawer tells us, for example, that in Britain patriotism has become so inadmissible that showing the flag is associated with fascistic tendencies. This is a slight but significant mistake. Showing the Union Jack—that is to say, the British flag—is not a sign of fascistic tendencies; however, showing the English flag (the cross of St. George) is, or at least has been until very recently, strongly associated with such tendencies. A reluctance to display the English, as against the British, flag therefore has nothing to do with the decline of patriotism, and everything to do with a dislike of the chauvinistic hooliganism that, unfortunately, the older flag has come to represent.

In like fashion, Berlinski accepts uncritically the deeply conventional, but nonetheless mistaken, idea that because British society was class-ridden there was little social mobility within it. A class society is not, however, a caste society. On the contrary, Britain was—at least,

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before the advent of the supposedly egalitarian social policies that Berlinski correctly identifies as stultifying—the most socially mobile society in Europe, and among the most socially mobile in the world. On Berlinski's view, the immense social, financial, professional, and intellectual success of those Jews who arrived in Britain penniless from the shtetl would be inexplicable. The difference between the success of the Sikhs and the Hindus compared with the relative failure of the Muslims is not attributable, as she claims, to differences in their initial social class and level of education: there must be some other explanation. When an informant tells her that there are, indeed, a few Indian physicians in Britain, a piece of information that she appears to take at face value, she demonstrates a certain detachment from current British social realities: there are, in fact, whole hospitals with scarcely a British doctor employed among their senior staff. Indeed, the senior staff of the hospitals in which I last worked in Britain could almost have furnished a General Assembly of the United Nations, with the Indians being by far the largest delegation.

However, a few errors or even misconceptions do not vitiate wide-ranging books. Both Bawer and Berlinski understand that Europe's inability, indeed unwillingness, to confront the danger in its midst is linked to some deeper pathology, while Phillips provides an important case history, that of Britain. Bawer is particularly strong on the unreflecting anti-Americanism of much of the European intelligentsia, a mixture of historical condescension, envy, and bitterness at loss of status in the world. Europeans often speak to Americans as they would never speak to other foreigners, certainly not to North Koreans for example (were they ever to meet any). As all three authors are at pains to point out, it is possible to disagree with American foreign policy without likening George W. Bush to Hitler, a preposterous comparison often made that reveals that, for the person who makes it, American policy is the pretext rather than the cause of anti-American feeling.

BERLINSKI, APART FROM BEING BY FAR the funniest of the authors, digs deepest where the existential problems that underlie Western Europe's paralysis are concerned. There is a crisis of meaning and purpose in Western European societies that she spells out with admirable clarity. They are almost entirely post-religious, but they have found no form of transcendence to replace religion, and none is on the horizon. An awareness of belonging, or of contributing to, a collectivity or endeavor of world-importance is no longer possible for them (the European Union is the creation of bureaucrats, by bureaucrats, for bureaucrats). Modern Europeans believe in very little, except in as comfortable and safe a life as possible. Indeed, health and safety have altogether replaced faith, hope, and charity as the cardinal desiderata. It is scarcely any wonder that, when faced by people who, quite mistakenly and with a combination of staggering ignorance and arrogance, believe themselves to be in possession of a truth that justifies almost any atrocity committed, if not by them, exactly, then by those whom they have indoctrinated, modern Western Europeans do not know how to react. They have either forgotten what it is to believe in anything, to such an extent that they cannot really believe that anyone else believes in anything, either; or their memories of belief are of belief in something so horrible—Communism, for example, or Nazism—that they no longer believe that they have the right to pass judgment on anything. This is not a strong position from which to fight people who, by their own admission, hate you and are bent upon your destruction, brought about preferably at your own expense. First, you can't take them seriously; second, you suspect they might in any case be right. European multiculturalism is self-hatred writ large—and in the meantime is an employment opportunity for cultural bureaucrats.

Unfortunately, Berlinski herself indulges in the kind of historical criticism that Gramsci would have approved of as a means of undermining and weakening Western societies, and whose adoption by a large proportion of the population has rendered it vulnerable to the kind of nihilism she deplores. She says that the history of Europe is the history of war and genocide, which is about the same as writing that the history of the United States is the history of slavery and racial prejudice. "Ethnic wars," she writes, "class wars, revolutionary wars, religious wars, wars of ideology, and genocide are not aberrations in Europe's history; they *are* its history" (emphasis in the original). Two hundred pages later she writes again, of Europe's history, "century upon century of unmitigated slaughter and butchery...a tradition of virtually uninterrupted warfare since the sack of Rome." Unmitigated? Nothing else worth recording? Can she really think of no achievement worth mentioning, of nothing achieved in Europe except slaughter?

The whole of German history is treated as if it were but the run-up to Hitler, omitting its very considerable glories, and rendering inexplicable the loyalty of so many pre-Nazi Jews to Austro-German culture. The hapless loyalty of the great writer Joseph Roth, for example, to the memory of the Emperor Franz Josef, which was only half-ironic and bespoke an infinity of feeling, is quite unfathomable in Berlinski's simplistic view.

Both Bawer and Berlinski insist that one great difference between Western Europe and America is the survival of religion in America, which gives Americans a moral backbone (for want of a better term) that Western Europeans do not have. For myself, I am somewhat skeptical of the strength of American religious feeling compared with the breadth of the religious affiliation that they claim. If Americans were to experience a loss of confidence in their country's power, whether objectively justified or not, the crisis of meaning and purpose might strike them too. After all, pusillanimity is not even now confined to Western Europeans, though it is no doubt at its worst among them; the American response to the Danish cartoon crisis was little short of disgraceful, both in the government and the press. Indeed, the French for once were considerably less cowardly.

PHILLIPS DRAWS OUR ATTENTION TO THE paradoxical nature of Britain's Prime Minister, who appears so resolute in foreign, and so utterly spineless in domestic, policy. While he is not in any straightforward way an opportunist, and genuinely if delusively believes himself to be a man of principle, the fact is that going to war with Mr. Bush was the only means by which he could achieve personal world importance. Given America's overwhelming military might, he did not risk military defeat; but he was vulnerable at home because several vital parliamentary seats, traditionally Labour-voting, were strongly Muslim. And therefore he did not scruple to allow his party to make use of scarcely concealed anti-Semitic images during an election in which his chief opponent was Jewish; permitted his wife to appear in court to defend the supposed right of Muslim schoolchildren to go to school completely covered, in the full knowledge of what this really meant; and corruptly permitted the extension of postal voting to Muslim constituencies, thereby in effect disenfranchising Muslim women. Phillips makes clear the many ways in which Mr. Blair's government has been complicit with Islamism, and I doubt she will be receiving many invitations to Downing Street as a reward for her efforts.

Will these books appear to have been unduly alarmist in half a century's time? I certainly hope so, and indeed suspect that it might be so. We have had many perils and predicted apocalypses before. Islamism, and indeed (in my belief) the whole of Islam, is potentially very vulnerable to the corrosive effect of the intellectual acid-bath of rational criticism. Therefore, what we have to fear is fear itself: a fact of which the Islamists are themselves fully aware. I hope only that the ultimate critique of Islam in Europe is not a fascist one.

Theodore Dalrymple is a contributing editor to City Journal. *His most recent book is* Romancing Opiates *(Encounter Books).*

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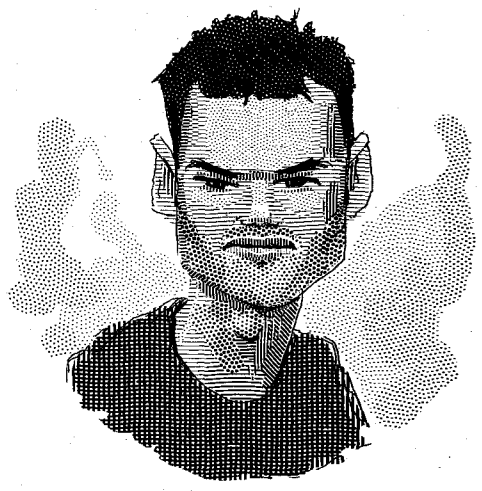
Book Review by Richard Samuelson

Faith-based Liberalism

The Good Fight: Why Liberals—and Only Liberals—Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again, by Peter Beinart. HarperCollins, 304 pages, $25.95



Peter Beinart

According to Peter Beinart, American liberalism faces a situation much like the one it faced at the start of the Cold War. In the late 1940s, many liberals denied that Stalin was an enemy and regarded war itself as the gravest threat to America. Centrist liberals like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Reinhold Niebuhr drove these "doughfaces" out of the American establishment and helped President Harry S. Truman lay the foundation of America's victory in the Cold War, not to mention of the Democratic Party's continued electoral viability.

Unlike many of his friends on today's Left, Beinart, editor-at-large at *The New Republic,* understands that America's traditional policy in the Middle East no longer works and that the current war might be necessary. For years we were friendly with the region's tyrants because they kept the oil flowing. At the same time, since tyranny provoked discontent, these clever tyrants vented their people's frustration and anger in an Islamist, anti-American direction. The September 11 attacks reaped this whirlwind. The people in the region who had learned to hate us found a means to attack us. America's strategy in the region had to change. Beinart therefore supported the war in Iraq. He agrees with President George W. Bush that since tyranny caused the problem, liberty is the solution: "Bush rightly believes that defeating jihadism requires promoting liberty."

Though Beinart still believes in the cause, he now regrets having supported the war. He thinks that Bush should have tried containment and should have worked more closely with our allies. More importantly, he thinks that Bush's means are unsuited to his ends, that he is a half-hearted social reformer. Although keen on liberty, Bush "is much less sure that defeating jihadism requires promoting equality (or at least equality of opportunity)." Beinart is, in other words, an unreconstructed 20th-century liberal. At least when looking abroad, he forgets the lessons about the limits of government, and the importance of property rights, that some of his neo-liberal colleagues at *The New Republic,* not to mention almost all conservatives, emphasize. He believes that "equality of opportunity" necessitates ambitious, intrusive government, and that Bush should try to solve the region's problems with the methods that mid-century liberals preferred. The U.S. should secularize the schools and, presumably, create welfare states, government-run health care, and job-training programs in the region. What else would a liberal say?

If Beinart can rally liberals behind the war against terrorism, more power to him. Unfortunately, he isn't up to it. He doesn't grasp the difference between our day and the liberal establishment's heyday, and so overlooks the difference between his own brand of liberalism and theirs. Near the end of the book, Beinart quotes Robert Putnam: "The closing decades of the twentieth century found Americans growing ever less connected with one another and with collective life.... Our 'we' steadily shriveled." By contrast, Beinart notes, "the era that produced cold war liberalism—the period between World War II and Vietnam—has been called the 'golden age of civic engagement.' Americans voted more, contacted their legislators more, volunteered for campaigns more, and believed in their government more than they had during the Gilded Age of the 1920s."

The period in which the liberal establishment dominated was unique. It was the age of three TV networks and one unchallenged national newspaper. It marked a low-tide in immigration, another factor creating an unusual degree of cultural unity. Internationally, America enjoyed unprecedented dominance because Europe and Japan were recovering from the War, and each faced a major totalitarian threat close to home. Perhaps more revealingly, Beinart completely overlooks 19th-century America, the period when civic involvement reached its apogee. By contrast, the rise of the administrative state seems consistently to have reduced civic engagement by making voting and participation in local government less relevant to people's lives. Big government and golden ages of civil participation seldom go together.

Since Beinart spends so much time on his liberal predecessors, he should consider what they were up to. Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann, the founders of Beinart's magazine, believed that social scientists, trained in modern universities, could manage society and the economy justly and efficiently, thus improving on the Constitution, the free market, and, not incidentally, the natural rights philosophy of America's founding. In the 1940s, Niebuhr, Beinart's favorite liberal, made the same point. Beinart doesn't see the connection between such progressivism and New Deal

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liberalism. "In its modern American context," he writes on the first page of his book, "liberalism—the belief that government should intervene in society to solve problems that individuals cannot solve alone—began with Franklin Roosevelt. Progressivism has older roots and different emphases." His notes, however, betray the truth. Roosevelt said that "the liberal party is a party which believes that, as new conditions and problems arise beyond the power of men and women to meet as individuals, it becomes the duty of Government itself to find new remedies with which to meet them." The root of the word Progressive is "progress." The ideas of progress made liberalism, once anti-statist, into something progressive and statist. New Dealers took the Progressive critique of the founding as a point of departure for their enterprise.

Beinart's blindness to the connection between New Deal liberalism and Progressivism tells us something important about his thought. According to Beinart, "liberals pride themselves on their empiricism," that is, their skill at assembling and analyzing facts. The trouble is that empiricism finds its limit when one has to decide what constitutes a fact. Empirical thinkers are always tempted to simplify their data in order to make scientific tests possible. More tellingly, although empiricism can suggest what input will likely yield a given output, it cannot say what is a good output. It can discuss facts, not "values." Among mid-century liberals, history answered the riddle that their empiricism posed. They could not ascertain, strictly speaking, what was right or what was good. By tracing developments over time, however, they could say which way the country had to move *next*. This view of history predisposed liberals like Croly and Niebuhr to think that change, fundamentally, was necessary and good; that change was always, or almost always, progress. Schlesinger was predisposed to view the Depression as a "crisis of the old order," rather than an economic downturn, worsened by the decisions of policy-makers, because he had internalized the progressive understanding of history. Richard Epstein points out that, in the realm of law, "the older conceptual scheme did not collapse of its own weight. All that really happened was that several justices lost faith in it, without being able to show where it broke down." Liberals *had* to assume that the pre-liberal order was failing. The day they stopped assuming (forget about proving) that, they gave up their reason for being.

History made it both possible and necessary to be in the progressive sense a man of the Left. The best definition of a man of the Left is someone who thinks that the future will be decisively different from the past. For if human nature is changeable, then men can behave very differently, and better, than they ever have before. War may be the way of the past; peace can become the way of the future.

> citizenship can be as powerful a force for moral revival as religion. And democracy is not America's gift to the world. It is the goal for which we struggle, against the injustice in our society, in solidarity with those people struggling against the injustice in theirs.

A 1993 YALE GRADUATE, BEINART IS IN the first generation of post-Cold War liberals. Perhaps as a result, he never learned to take the idea of history seriously. A moderate by inclination and a patriot by sentiment, he instinctively turns away from today's anarchic, anti-American Left. Indeed, his stated goal is to save the Left from irrelevance by making it more responsible. But can the Left survive without faith in history?

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union were history-shattering events. History was not inevitably tending toward socialism, or even toward the "middle way" that liberals touted. In America, the success of conservative politics also mocked the progressive faith. History told liberals that conservatives were "the stupid party," who made themselves irrelevant by clinging to old ways. The continued presence of conservatives in America, not to mention their unprecedented success, made a hash of that idea. To say that the most vital force in American politics in the 1980s and '90s was an anachronism is to render the term anachronism meaningless.

What becomes of American liberalism when it turns away from history? In Beinart's hands, it becomes religion. He litters his book with religious language. Hubert Humphrey "worshiped the New Deal." Beinart's heroes shared "beliefs in anti-Communism, racial integration, and America's capacity for redemption." Together these made American liberalism "a fighting faith." It is not a coincidence that Beinart's favorite thinker is not a political philosopher but a theologian. "Niebuhr," he writes, "provided the theoretical heft" for mid-century liberalism. Actually, he provided its theological heft. In the late 1940s, Niebuhr said that the task liberals faced was to "make our political and economic life more worthy of our faith." An empirical thinker, Beinart thinks that ends are matters of faith, not reason.

Beinart might be a realist when it comes to policy, but he is a Romantic when it comes to questions of justice, and he instinctively looks left to find his moral bearings. In the book's penultimate paragraph he writes,

Beinart seeks redemption through politics, and he does so in the name of "democracy," which for him is not a form of government but a way of life in which all citizens feel a communal bond, and are equal in more than merely their rights. That is why he takes the loss of "our 'we'" so personally. In democracy, he seeks a communal home.

Unlike so many on today's Left, Niebuhr and Schlesinger knew that they were standing up for Western civilization against barbarism. Having beaten the Nazis, their liberalism had a seriousness that echoed the older liberalism of the American Founders. Schlesinger called his opponents on the Left "doughfaces"—moral purists who refused to face the decisions that policy required. Niebuhr preached a certain kind of moral realism: war is sometimes necessary. "We take, and must continue to take, morally hazardous actions to preserve our civilization," he wrote. From both, Beinart learns something about the limits of what can be done in politics. Here we find an echo of the classical idea of statesmanship—trying to reconcile what is desirable with what is possible.

Yet he misunderstands the nature of those limits, and their connection to liberal democracy. He complains repeatedly that conservatives see the world in Manichaean terms. But what looks like simplified, Manichaean rhetoric to a liberal is, in fact, a different way of talking about the world in light of man's limitations. To be a liberal in the best sense of the term is to believe that the world cannot be redeemed through politics, and to understand that stubbornness might itself be good. Liberal tolerance grows from an understanding of man's inherent weaknesses, in addition to his capacity for greatness. Beinart seems to understand that, but he hasn't thought it through. If he had, he wouldn't turn to politics in search of brotherhood, which is something politics cannot deliver without resorting to tyranny.

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Essay by William Voegeli

The Era of Big Ideas is Over

Do liberals think that conservatives' fundamental ideas are wrong? Or do they think that *having* fundamental ideas is wrong? In the intramural debate over liberalism's meaning and future these questions have become contentious. But whether this is a real debate between distinct alternatives or just much ado about nothing remains to be seen.

Certainly, the liberal world is abuzz with the idea that it needs Big Ideas. Kenneth Baer and Andrei Cherny, the editors of the new quarterly *Democracy*, seek to revive liberalism by "grappling with essential questions about how the world works and how it should work." According to Michael Tomasky, writing in *The American Prospect*, "What the Democrats still don't have is a philosophy, a big idea that unites their proposals and converts them from a hodgepodge of narrow and specific fixes into a vision for society." He calls this "the crucial ingredient of politics, the factor that helps unite a party (always a coalition of warring interests), create majorities, and force the sort of paradigm shifts that happened in 1932 and 1980."

Big Idea Liberalism

The editors of *Democracy* deserve an incomplete rather than a passing or failing grade, since their journal is new. The biggest idea they've come up with so far is that big ideas are a good thing. Tomasky has more to say about liberals' ultimate concerns. The thesis of his widely discussed article in the May 2006 *American Prospect* is that "Democrats need to become the party of the common good." He calls for a "new philosophy" that "attempts to enlist citizens in large projects to which everyone contributes and from which everyone benefits."

For Tomasky, the common good will revive a liberal ideology that has been dominated since the late 1960s by just two principles: diversity and rights. He offers a carefully hedged critique of the liberalism defined by identity politics and the proliferation of non-negotiable rights. He allows that busing maybe wasn't such a great idea, and that calls for "law and order" were sort of *about* law and order rather than being code words for racism. He has nothing bad to say about *Roe v. Wade* but, interestingly, praises pro-choice activists in South Dakota who are trying to overturn its new abortion law by referendum rather than litigation. "Using the political process in this way is a huge improvement over running yet again to the courts. In the long run, showing faith in this kind of democratically negotiated outcome is far better for liberalism."

Apart from a few substantive hints around the edges, however, Tomasky's advocacy of the common good is long on exhortation and short on rigor. He rings as many changes on "all for one and one for all" as a single essay can stand. ("We're all in this...together, and...we have to pull together, make some sacrifices, and, just sometimes, look beyond our own interests to solve our problems and create the future," he writes breathlessly.)

Common-good liberalism, it turns out, is about *saying* things differently rather than doing things differently, much less doing different things. He says that many of the agenda items of the liberal constituency groups are "laudable"—he doesn't identify one that isn't—but if they can't "justify" that agenda "in more universalist terms rather than particularist ones, then they just shouldn't be taken seriously." For example, "immigration policy can't be chiefly about the rights of undocumented immigrants; it needs to be about what's good for the country." Fine, but Tomasky gives no hint that his view of what's good for the country will be any different from the National Council of La Raza's.

No known liberal constituency is likely to embrace the common good as a defining idea, even if someone makes an argument for it that, unlike Tomasky's, is clear and compelling. Guy Molyneux, a pollster who works with Democratic politicians and labor unions, says:

> The most powerful way to talk about Social Security...is to frame it in terms of a contribution people make through their payroll taxes.... I've contributed to this same system all my working years. Having done that, the government owes me back.... I wish the generational compact, the social solidarity [arguments] were as powerful. But they aren't, they simply aren't.... [The first idea] brings it much more to you—what you have a right to, as opposed to this sense of obligation to one another.

Tomasky tells us that he had his "epiphany" about the common good during the 1981 strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. It was then he realized that PATCO's determination to break the law, threaten the transportation system with chaos, and put thousands of travelers at risk in order to extract higher salaries, was a clear violation of liberalism's fundamental principle: "Citizens should be called upon to look beyond their own self-interest and work for a greater common interest."

Just kidding—that's not what he realized at all. Tomasky's actual epiphany led him from PATCO to thinking about "history and money and power...about the precept that real thought and engagement on my part required looking beyond first assumptions, examining a problem from points of view other than my own, and considering any action's impact on the whole society." On the basis of this soggy banality Tomasky sets aside any misgivings about PATCO's actions, saving his reproaches for President Reagan and the "TV loudmouths" who "aped" his "line" about the strike being illegal.

A similar incoherence can be seen in Tomasky's criticism of busing and endorsement of affirmative action; he's oblivious to the fact that his arguments could just as well be transposed. Busing was one of the bad policies that "were pursued not because they would be good for every American, but because they would expand the rights of some Americans." Affirmative action, however, "has served us well as a whole, enriched us." As Tomasky sees it, "All over the country... attitudes...have changed dramatically for the better," because liberals "decided to demand of citizens that they come to terms with diversity." Demanding that citizens come to terms with diversity was exactly what liberals said in defense of busing 35 years ago. By the same token, bright students kept out of colleges they wouldn't diversify, and contractors denied government business they would have secured in a color-blind competition, will be gratified to learn that affirmative action is not one of those liberal mistakes that expands the rights of some Americans while disregarding what's good for every American.

Case-By-Case Liberalism

It should come as little surprise that the call for a new liberalism of Big Ideas and the Common Good has not been well-received by those liberal thinkers and pundits who uphold the reigning orthodoxy of pragmatic progressivism. Certainly, the *New Republic*'s Jonathan Chait is having none of it. "Big ideas won't save liberalism," he writes, because the fight between liberals and conservatives is asymmetric. While conservatives believe in

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principles like free markets and limited government, for liberals "everything works on a case-by-case basis." Liberals will just have to live with the fact that nobody knows what they stand for because, Chait asserts, "you cannot, and should not, formulate sweeping dogmas when you're operating on a case-by-case basis." Thus, "any debate that takes place at the level of ideological generality...inherently favors the right."

Liberals' rejection of "sweeping dogmas" has a long pedigree. In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt argued for concentrating on practical results through "bold, persistent experimentation." "It is common sense," he said, "to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."

Spurning dogma makes liberalism flexible, but also incoherent. Voters are rightly suspicious of politicians who promise, if given the keys to the government car, to choose whether or not to stop at intersections on a case-by-case basis. "Should government provide everybody's education?" Chait asks. "Yes. Should government manufacture everybody's blue jeans? No. And so on."

And so on...what? Where? "And so on" suggests continuation in a defined direction, the application of a general approach to new particulars. But there are only political particulars for Chait—generalities have no bearing on the business of governing—so there's nothing to be said about how liberalism will move from one issue to another. The implication is that since liberalism doesn't really have a theory, it will acquire all its meaning in practice: "Liberalism" will be the accumulation of policy choices that cause the sort of bright, decent, well-intentioned people who attend editorial meetings at *The New Republic* to say, "That sounds about right," before they go on to the next case.

Consider taxation. Conservatives have a principled (or if you prefer, dogmatic) position against the progressive income tax. The argument, as spelled out by F.A. Hayek in *The Constitution of Liberty*, is that the rule of law requires universality. Once you make different people pay different tax rates, or obey different speed limits, there's nothing to stop the government from enacting the most arbitrary, capricious, or burdensome policies it can get away with. The liberal "principle" that people with higher incomes should pay higher tax rates is useless: it's impossible to obey a principle if it's impossible to say what it would mean to exceed it.

And, indeed, under case-by-caseism the top income tax rate stood at 70% in 1980. Inflation pushed growing numbers of unrich Americans into tax brackets ostensibly meant for the wealthy. When Ronald Reagan reduced the top rate to 50%, and indexed tax rates to inflation, liberals denounced this "reckless giveaway to the rich." But the 1980 election really was a paradigm shift, one that has constrained the policy options available to "that-sounds-about-right" practitioners. It is impossible, a generation after Reagan's election, to find a liberal who has a good word to say about his tax cuts; but it's also impossible to find one who proposes to restore the 70% bracket or discard indexing.

Liberals resent that so many of their aspirations have disappeared from the national agenda. (No one talks about Marshall Plans for our cities anymore.) For liberals, the silver lining of this paradigm shift is that the democratic principle might yet rescue the case-by-case approach from the taint of elitism. Governance according to, "That sounds about right to us," will be less high-handed if the "us" includes cashiers and electricians instead of just Kennedy School graduates. If those cashiers and electricians met those policy wonks on a frequent and equal basis to discuss the range of choices facing the government, liberalism would take forever to formulate but would emerge with increased legitimacy.

In the absence of that communitarian fantasy, however, democratizing case-by-case liberalism means entrusting it to the implacable demands of an endless array of interest groups, thus making it even more confused. A self-governing republic is a dubious laboratory for bold, persistent experimentation. The "try something" part isn't hard. Admitting failures frankly and moving on, though, is. It is rare for failed programs to be widely popular, but they can flourish for decades by being *narrowly* popular. Once a bad program acquires a determined constituency, the gates of cost-benefit analysis shall not prevail against it.

In a book celebrating FDR's "Second Bill of Rights" as the greatest speech of the 20th century, Cass Sunstein specifically repudiates Roosevelt's call to recognize "the right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living." (The idea of a Second Bill of Rights, as proclaimed in the 1944 State of the Union address, sounds too dogmatic to be consistent with the pragmatic imperative to "above all, try something." Suffice it to say that FDR was flexible about being flexible.) On the contrary, says Sunstein, "[Some] farmers should go out of business. There is no more reason to guarantee 'every' farmer a reasonable profit than to make this guarantee for computer companies, airlines or real estate agents." It is impossible to find a liberal writer who takes the contrary position defending farm subsidies. With thousands of beneficiaries but no justification, however, the farm programs go on and on—an old, persistent experiment that can never fail enough to be abandoned.

Tweedledum and Tweedledim

CASE-BY-CASE LIBERALISM REDUCES governance to messing around. We shouldn't be surprised when the result turns out to be a mess. Whatever the weaknesses of Chait's argument, the burden on the liberals who disagree with him is to offer a compelling alternative. Big ideas won't help if they're bad ideas—thin, confused, or impossible to flesh out. And, on this score, the hazy worldviews offered by liberals who proclaim big ideas help us understand why Chait disdains them.

If common-good liberalism is pliable enough to endorse rather than condemn the PATCO strike, then it can lend itself to any demand of any liberal interest group, provided that someone ponders history and money and power long enough to come up with a common-good rationale for the policy. Chait is honest, at least, about making it up as he goes along. Tomasky wants to have it both ways, for liberalism to acquire the high seriousness that comes from having a philosophy, while retaining the plasticity to be about whatever circumstances, political pressures, or the latest bright idea dictates.

Noam Scheiber of *The New Republic* recognizes the problem, arguing that it's impossible for liberals to invoke the common good whenever it's convenient and ignore it when it's not. It would be better for Democrats not to bring the idea up in the first place, he says, rather than go to the voters as the party fervently dedicated to advancing the common good—except when they aren't. National health insurance, for example, can't be mandated by the common good if abortion remains solely a question of inviolable privacy rights. But the latter position, clearly, is not open for discussion among liberals. At a recent forum of the liberal Center for American Progress, Rachel Laser, an abortion rights activist, said that 1.3 million abortions in America each year is too many. She reports that when she asked how many people in the room felt the same way, "It was only me and maybe one other who raised our hands."

Ultimately, a public philosophy based on the common good won't work unless it can make useful distinctions about what is and isn't common, and what is and isn't good. As it stands, common-good liberalism is just case-by-case liberalism on stilts. In the fight between those who say big ideas are indispensable to the resuscitation of liberalism and those who say big ideas are incompatible with the essence of liberalism, the scorecard shows that, so far, both sides are right.

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Essay by Larry P. Arnn

Why the GOP is Flunking Higher Education

For the first time since the passage of the 1965 Higher Education Act, the Republican Party, in control of both houses of Congress and the presidency, has undertaken to reauthorize the Act. There are two standards according to which this may proceed. The first is expressed in the foundations of the United States, of the Republican Party, and of the conservative movement with which that party is affiliated in its modern dispensation. The second can be found in the Higher Education Act itself. It is possible to follow one standard or the other, but not both.

The first standard is like the American Revolution itself. It is built around a principle, and it has a plain though ingenious administrative design arising from that principle and intended to protect it. The second standard is like the revolution that has come over American government, especially in the past 50 years—the revolution that gave rise to the modern bureaucratic state. The Higher Education Act of 1965 is a landmark of that revolution. These two standards differ both in principle and in practice. Seeking different ends, they require different means.

Landmark of Progressivism

The Higher Education Act of 1965, a centerpiece of the Great Society, is the first and still the authoritative insertion of the new bureaucratic form into higher learning. The Act is a thing of the greatest importance, but a thing almost without peaks or central features in its language or self-explanation. It and its progeny are all details—details numbering in the tens or hundreds of thousands. They are uncountable and, by any one person, unknowable. Every year these details are adjusted, refined, forgotten, remembered, and reinterpreted in countless ways by countless people. But every five or six years relatively major changes are made by several pieces of legislation. This is what is meant by "reauthorization."

Generally, the Act provides for direct aid from the federal government to colleges and their students. The original edition of the Act lists, on page one, the additional purposes of assisting the people of the United States with "housing, poverty, government, recreation, employment, youth opportunities, transportation, health, and land use." I have not read the whole Act, nor probably has anyone else, so it cannot be said with confidence that it does not regulate breeding practices among adders and wasps. Everything else seems to be in.

Conservatives, when they argue for school choice (a good cause), like to say that the elementary and secondary schools should be financed on the same principles as colleges, where student aid follows the student to whichever school he pleases. This is true enough, but it is not the aid alone that follows the student. Title IV of the current Act, which regulates colleges accepting federal student financial aid, includes now more than 300 pages of regulations. Failure of a senior college official to comply in a material respect can lead to heavy fines and imprisonment. Hillsdale College does not participate in this federal largesse, but nonetheless I surprised our attorney in Washington once by asking that he send me the regulations. He refused on the ground that I could not understand them. My academic ego was ruffled, so he explained that he could not understand them either; his firm keeps a staff person to do nothing but try to understand them. The Department of Education often calls this person to get her opinion on what the Act might say and mean.

Of course these regulations grow in number and scope every year. Of course they affect profoundly the management deliberations of any college—that is to say, practically every college—that is subject to their commands. The Higher Education Act is the very model of bureaucratic legislation: top down, complex, requiring interpretation of endless details by everyone concerned, and placing power over local things in remote beings whose very job titles are indecipherable, and who have almost no direct contact with the actual things being accomplished.

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that all principle in the Higher Education Act is lost in detail. The principle is instead to be found there. The number, variety, and changeability of the details are the expression of the principle.

Entrenched Constituencies

This mighty act is the bog upon which the Republicans now seek to impress their seal, the entangling web upon which they seek to erect their legacy. They have the excuse that they are already stuck in the bog and caught in the web. The bog is watered and the web is spun by two key forces. The first is popular support, and the second is the power of the highly intelligent and well organized people who work in colleges. They are the direct beneficiaries of federal spending in this area, and they attend with penetrating eye all the doings of Washington, especially when it concerns this spending.

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Popular support for the Act is partly grounded in something old and noble in American history: education is seen as the road up, the avenue of promise for all. Popular government, moreover, requires that a capacity for governing be widely spread, that education at all levels should impart the knowledge and civility requisite to good citizenship. Without these qualities, the people who make the laws will not intend either justice or liberty, and the people who live under the laws will not know what to do about that. The preservation of the republic depends, therefore, upon a proper system of education. At its highest, education is the contemplation of the ultimate ends in virtue of which means are selected for the sake of private and public happiness. The people's recognition of education's importance creates favor for a Higher Education Act presumed to serve these ends.

In addition to this old and noble reason for popular support of the Act, there is in modern times the acute problem of the expense of college. Since the passing of the Higher Education Act, college expense has exploded, especially in recent years. Every constituency except the richest fears the cost of college in the same way that people fear catastrophic setbacks to their health. (Elected representatives are certainly aware that citizens in the middle income ranges, especially when they are married and have children, tend to vote Republican.) Government help with the cost of education is very welcome to those who have children approaching college age. These people are often unaware of the impact that federal regulation and subsidy of education have upon its cost. Anyway, they want help right now.

The elites who work in our universities seek power more than wisdom, and they are successful in their quest. The modern research university has made them first the teachers and then the advisors to those who govern. Their predecessors, the fathers of the modern research university, were also the creators of the modern bureaucratic state. Our professors and administrators have inherited a station of prestige and influence, and they mean to maintain it. Any reforms of higher education will be conceived with their advice, settled with their agreement, and implemented by their hands.

This transformation of the university is a new thing, compared with the ancient lineage of the institution. The modern research university was born in the 19th century and became dominant in the 20th. It was only in the 1980s that college graduates began to think and to vote markedly to the left of others. Still, the new way is deeply entrenched, so deeply that hardly anyone in politics, Republican or Democrat, imagines an alternative to it. The speed, breadth, and depth of its victory are staggering.

Republicans and Education Policy

It would not then be an easy task to make any fundamental alteration to federal higher education policy. It can, however, be extended and enlarged, and to this task the Republicans have set their shoulders. Since Reagan left office they have consistently made the situation worse. The elder Bush ran for president on the hope that he would be "the Education President." The world of the highly educated sharpened its talons at his approach, took his money (or rather, our money), and then campaigned for his opponent after four years. Very satisfactory.

The younger Bush has, characteristically, brought more energy and thrust to education policy than did his father. With control of Congress, and guided by his long-term colleague Margaret Spellings, President Bush has undertaken major efforts first in elementary and secondary education, and now in higher education. There is both ambition and strategy here, and it is pursued persistently and with resolution in the face of resistance. Secretary of Education Spellings was with Bush in the White House before she went to the Department of Education, and she was with him in Texas when he reformed education policy there. They are close, she is trusted, and in important ways she is very worthy of that trust. What she and the President are doing is bold and well-intentioned, and there is good in it.

They believe in competition in education, and at the elementary and secondary level they have supported school choice. There is not much of it, but what there is owes to their efforts, and what is lacking owes to the power of the education establishment. The Bush Administration has moreover stopped the move toward federalizing student loans. The Clinton Administration had proclaimed how much more cheaply the government could initiate and manage these loans than the private sector. There is no more talk like that.

There is bad to go with the good, and not a little. The first bad thing the Republicans have done is spend a lot of money. Since 2001, the year of the September 11 attacks, defense spending has risen 47%. Higher education spending has risen 133%. There are major increases in most higher education programs, especially those regarding need-based aid. Both the amounts available and the upward limits of the income groups to whom they are available have risen sharply. This cascade of funds is unprecedented in absolute amounts, and it exceeds all prior experience in rates of growth, except for the Act's first heady days.

More recently the Republicans seem to have become aware that this additional spending is not quite getting the job done. For one thing, they cannot seem to spend money as fast as colleges can raise tuition. The people they mean to help are not better off, but the colleges are. There is some sense that all this new spending is making rapid tuition increases possible, or anyway contributes to them. Also, Republicans are aware that the colleges upon whom they heap money are the arsenals and training ground of their enemies.

A Bill and a Report

The key Republican documents so far are two among many. First there is a bill now passed by the House of Representatives, the College Access & Opportunity Act (HR 609). The parallel bill has not yet passed the Senate. Meanwhile, Secretary Spellings has formed a National Commission on the Future of Higher Education (hereafter, the National Commission), and it has published a draft report. After an extension, the full report is due in September.

We will not deal here with most of the critical, urgent, compelling, crying, and pressing needs that fill these documents and justify their existence. We stipulate that there ought to be a lot more technology in colleges; that every racial minority should be proportionally represented in every college; that working people, nontraditional people, frightened people, older people, and younger people all need better access to college, especially when they want to go at night, or in the morning or afternoon. We stipulate that the ratings of colleges by the various private firms are not very good and also hard to understand. Yes, college costs too much. Yes, there is a global marketplace, and people need to be pretty darned well informed to have any hope of making a living. In the future, if we are all not a lot smarter and better educated, we will be left behind. Sure enough, kids are embarrassingly ignorant; for example, they cannot add and subtract, nor read the jokes written about their ignorance. These are very important subjects, but there is no room to address them adequately in any publication not produced by the federal government.

We will linger but a moment on the two big crises that animate both the House bill and the Draft Report of the National Commission. They are the extravagant cost of college and the miserable failures in basic skills, especially math and science but also literacy, of our high school and college graduates.

About cost, neither the House bill nor the Draft Report recognizes the part that federal subsidy of education has played in the explosion of college costs. The House jumped right over the legacy of Reagan to follow Richard Nixon: it flirted for a time with price controls.

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The Draft Report has lots of ideas to cut costs, and some of them sound like they might work. Maybe colleges ought to try them. To pass a law requiring them, a law drafted mostly by people not responsible for controlling costs or making a college budget work, is simple hubris. It is not the only hubris in the report.

The one federal policy that would work is not mentioned at all, despite the fact that the Bush Administration, in another department, has done some of its best work in pursuing it. In health care, health savings accounts (HSAs) and high-deductible policies are making patients more important in the health care system. These patients are spending their own money, and in a miraculous development, they are more careful with it than they are with the money of others. Instead of learning this lesson, the National Commission is promising more subsidies to colleges and threatening regulation if they do not watch their costs.

Problems in math, science, and literacy, the National Commission regards as very urgent, and they are. The Workforce/Education Subcommittee of the President's Advisory Council on Science and Technology, under the excellent Robert Herbold (a board member at the Heritage Foundation and former senior executive at Microsoft and at Proctor & Gamble), finds that our kindergarten students rank with the best in the world in their knowledge of science and math. For each year that they are subjected to the capable attentions of our public education system, they fall a step behind. By the time they graduate from high school, they rank at the 10th percentile in math internationally, struggling to keep ahead of unschooled goatherds in the Third World. The devastation is occurring despite the expenditure of vast sums, despite the regular reinvention of the education system by the experts—not teachers—who are sovereign in its affairs. We have already a centralized, planned, and top-down system. It is in its maturity. Nonetheless, its failures are used to justify its expansion.

The National Commission has impressive ideas, or anyway an impressive number of ideas, for dealing with the crisis, all built on the same notion: once upon a time, in Camelot, the Soviet Union fired a rocket into space before we did, and so the federal government began funding higher education, and we had a great coordinated national effort, and we became the leaders in science and technology. Secretary Spellings tells this story often. It is the same story that was told back at the time of Sputnik, and it was used effectively to justify passage of the original Higher Education Act.

The story is nice, but it cannot be true. Sputnik went up in 1957, after Americans had invented the telephone, the laser, the transistor, done half the work to discover DNA, settled a continent, and covered it with railways, roads, airports, and communications. We managed to do all of this without the Department of Education. Federal aid to higher education started in small ways a year after Sputnik. We landed on the moon in 1969, twelve years after Sputnik, barely time to get an undergraduate degree and then a Ph.D. No student funded even in the first year can have played an important part in the moon landing. It is simply not possible that federal aid to education had a significant impact on the space race. Nor is it possible that our race with the central planners in Moscow was won by duplicating their methods. The genius of the American people lies elsewhere.

The Academic Bill of Rights

This revival of the thinking that led to the Department of Education is widespread among Republicans and many conservatives. They are now appealing to the example of the Left as their guide to reform, and in important ways they are proposing to go further than the inventors of the New Freedom, the New Deal, and the Great Society even imagined. Especially is this true when they address the content of higher education, the question of what is taught in the college classroom. The House bill timidly and the Draft Report aggressively take up this question.

Section 103 of the College Access and Opportunity Act contains a statement on "student

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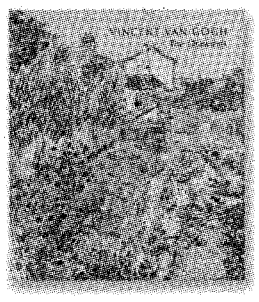

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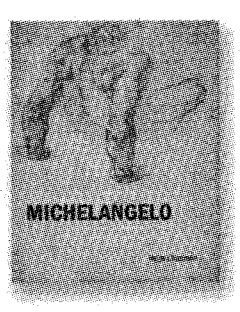

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speech and association rights." The "Bill Summary" released by the House Committee on Education and the Workforce says that this section is modeled on the Academic Bill of Rights, an idea proposed by David Horowitz. Horowitz, a lion on the campus and an effective guerrilla fighter in good causes, has reason to make his recommendations. He knows first hand, by visiting dozens of college campuses where he is a popular speaker, how skewed are the opinions that reign there among the faculty. His idea of an Academic Bill of Rights is to turn to advantage the notion of balance and value-free neutrality to which those campuses pay lip service. Here is how he describes it:

> All higher education institutions in this country embrace principles of academic freedom that were first laid down in 1915 in the famous *General Report* of the American Association of University Professors, titled "The Principles of Tenure and Academic Freedom." The *Report* admonishes faculty to avoid "taking unfair advantage of the student's immaturity by indoctrinating him with the teacher's own opinions before the student has had an opportunity to fairly examine other opinions upon the matters in question...."
>
> In other words, an education—as distinct from an indoctrination—makes students aware of a spectrum of scholarly views on matters of controversy and opinion, and does not make particular answers to such controversial matters the goal of the instruction. This is sound doctrine and common sense, and in one form or another it is recognized in the academic freedom guidelines of all accredited institutions of higher learning in the United States.

In another place, Horowitz writes:

> There are no "correct" answers to controversial issues, which is why they are controversial: scholars cannot agree. Answers to such questions are inherently subjective and opinion-based and teachers should not use their authority in the classroom to force students to adopt their positions. To do so is not education but indoctrination.

There are truths here, which give the statement plausibility. Certainly students should not be browbeaten by their professors, and anyway good students are not persuaded by this tactic. One ought not to draw conclusions without examining all the serious arguments on every side. Evidence must be eagerly sought and neither suppressed nor distorted. Faculty members, highly trained and carrying serious responsibilities, must have latitude in pursuing their work. These concepts are part of the substance of the academic life; they are old, much older than the American Association of University Professors and John Dewey.

The Heresy of Orthodoxy

Indeed, if the principles of academic freedom are real, they cannot have been laid down first in 1915. The very adjective "academic" is taken from Plato's ancient teaching ground. The first universities were operating, in the later 12th century, more or less as we know them today. A couple of centuries ago, Thomas Jefferson worked with fellow revolutionary James Madison to design a college curriculum; these men committed treason rather than submit to violations of freedom of speech and conscience. Madison wrote to Jefferson that it "is certainly very material that the true doctrines of Liberty, as exemplified in our political system, should be inculcated on those who are to sustain and may administer it." Then, he commits a heresy by speaking of heresy:

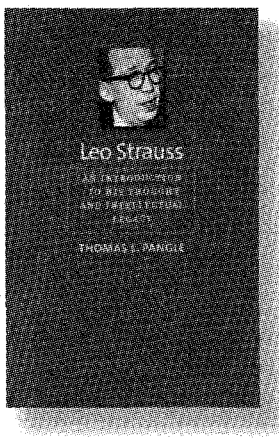
> After all, the most effectual safeguard against heretical intrusions into the school of politics, will be an able & orthodox professor, whose course of instruction will be an example to his successors, and may carry with it a sanction from the visitors.

Did Madison really mention "a sanction from the visitors," meaning the governing board of the college? What can he have been thinking? But before we condemn him as a bigot, we should remember his résumé. He cannot have meant that he wished to raise up generations of automatons, men who might, for example, do the bidding of a king or aristocrat merely because they were in awe of authority. That would be the kind of man Jefferson and Madison had lately expelled from the new nation by force. The co-author of the *Federalist*, the constitution writer whose preparation for that work was an academic study both exhaustive and profound, cannot have meant that education should be one-sided, partial, partisan, or shallow.

Jefferson is famous for writing that there are such things as the "laws of nature and of nature's God." His colleague George Washington spoke of the moral and political instruction to be found "in the economy and course of nature." They were talking about a "nature" and "laws of nature" that are accessible to reason, and better known if the reason is trained to see them. Jefferson and Madison thought that an educated man would have investigated these matters, indeed, that he would have come to some conclusions about them that would decisively shape his life. Students, when they are young, must have a reason to begin the journey of learning, or they will not begin it at all. If they start out indoctrinated with the facile notion that "there are no correct answers," they will be relieved of the burden of looking for them. They will be launched on a journey that can lead only to nowhere.

Liberal Game on a Liberal Field

Madison and Jefferson are not alone here. College after college has been founded with such words as *virtue, honor, piety, freedom, right,* and *goodness* in their mottoes and their missions. These are words of value, and they are controversial words. This means in the academic setting that they must be debated and discussed. At the same time it must be realized that whole institutions, many of them lasting centuries, have been built to teach or "indoctrinate" students with the principles that underlie moral and intellectual virtue.



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Are the purposes of those institutions rendered obsolete by the principles of academic freedom that were "first laid down" by the American Association of University Professors? That is the position of that association. It is precisely indoctrination in its new progressive principles that has remade the university into the thing we have today. By that transformation colleges have not gained but lost in openness, profundity, civility, and high purpose. The universities built on the new principles are a scandal of uniformity, of contempt for the unorthodox, of disdain for the backward folk who take the foundations of their colleges or their country seriously.

Why might this be? The trouble with pragmatism, they say, is that it does not work. The relativism and utilitarianism of the progressive doctrine are an invitation to the assertion of the will. This doctrine begins by undercutting the whole point of college, which is—choosing a traditional mission statement at random—to provide "such moral, social and artistic instruction and culture as will best develop the minds and improve the hearts of the students." (I borrow from the Hillsdale College Articles of Association, 1855.) In the older view, students should be invited to look, not to themselves and their own opinions, but rather outwards and upwards, beyond themselves to something against which they can judge the choices they must make. Shakespeare is beautiful and instructive, but not usually at first. He takes work. What justifies the work is the idea that some great thing awaits the one who does it successfully. The one who fails will be defective, in some important sense, in his ability to grasp the beautiful and the profound. You can pass a law that no child will be left behind. That does not make it so.

But if the measure of things is human opinion and, by extension, human making, it follows that one ought to assert oneself. Be a maker! Create *your* truth! *Your world*! This is why radical causes spill from college campuses faster than widgets off an assembly line. This is the engineering project at the heart of the modern university. The work of the progressive academy is to articulate new and ever new ideas of correctness, and to enforce them upon a population that now must wait for the wise and powerful to create their world.

Apart from the fact that the progressive idea of academic freedom undercuts the principles of college, and apart from the fact that it robs the student of his reason to study anything outside himself, it has the disadvantage that it will not work. Well-intentioned advocates like Horowitz apply this principle to open campuses up so that conservatives will not be hazed from the student body and the faculty. But this is to play on a field that the liberals prepared, and they have long since perfected the game. In most universities, hiring is done by faculty committees dominated by members of the academic department where the position is to be filled. The hiring of ideological friends is done with a wink and a nod, not in writing and never as an explicit criterion of employment. Within the existing system, the only way to fix the problem would be to introduce explicit ideological criteria into the hiring process. But Horowitz has agreed that this should not be done. His first principle is that it should not be done. Whether or not one agrees with that first principle, no sensible person would favor a federal law that required the introduction of the "ugly word" (Churchill's phrase) *ideology* into academic hiring.

The attempt to regulate speech in classrooms is doomed to the same failure. A federal law will be a clumsy instrument, ultimately interpreted by a bureaucracy in profound sympathy with academic liberalism, and implemented by academic liberals who enjoy dominance in the academy now. They have built the system, and they are masters of it. Whatever makes it stronger will make them stronger, too.

Why, anyway, should one attempt to combat these evils by shoring up the fortresses in which they are sheltered? Another idea would be to strengthen their victims. It is not the federal bureaucracy that needs more authority. It is the parents who send their children off to college in hopes they will not be ruined; and the trustees, alumni, and friends who are lectured by their alma mater when they object to its radicalism.

Failure of Understanding

We have proof in the House bill, and still more in the work of the National Commission, how little the problems are understood among Republicans. The National Commission is especially serious about enforcement. It means to make things clear, orderly, and disciplined. It will do that by using the methods of the Higher Education Act to reform the Act. Indeed, it will go beyond any method imagined by the original Act into a new world. There will be national standards. Compliance with them will be examined through a test administered to every student in the land. The results will be published so that everyone may see. Accrediting agencies, which will be nationalized or anyway more tightly regulated, will use these "outcomes data" to accredit or to withold accreditation.

All the vices of "teaching to the test" are latent in these proposals. Charles Murray writes of the No Child Left Behind Act that it has not improved test scores and that it creates an atmosphere of endless drilling, which is bad for learning. He bases his conclusions on the kind of close statistical analysis of which he is a master—in this case, however, analysis done by the Harvard Civil Rights Project. He agrees with them hardly at all in his political views, but their research seems sound. He is probably right that the tests actually stand in the way of learning.

Worse than the tests' ineffectiveness and waste of time will be the fact that they will be expressions of the worst forms of political correctness. One should fear this, first of all, because the National Commission is not interested in that subject. It justifies its reforms on the ground that math and science knowledge and literacy are poor, and college costs too much. This is true, but not exhaustive. Certain matters formerly thought important do not come up in the Draft Report nor, apparently, in the deliberations of the National Commission. The Draft Report does not mention religion, God, or morality. It does not mention history as a subject of study. It does not mention the Constitution, either for what it commands or allows, or as a subject of study. Although busy governing, the Report does not mention government as a subject of study. Philosophy, literature, happiness, goodness, and beauty are not to be seen. These terms abound in the mission statements and mottoes of American colleges whenever they are older than a hundred years, and in most of the younger ones.

A Mad World

The Draft Report is devoid of any echo of the purpose of education as it is trumpeted in our first national documents. It contains no whisper of the sentiments from the Northwest Ordinance, those regarding "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind." It does not so much as murmur the hallowed idea that students should learn the lessons upon which our republic was built, the teaching of which is the reason government would be interested in education in the first place. Have they read no Lincoln? For example, his prescription for public schools:

> that every man may receive at least, a moderate education, and thereby [be] enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions....

The tests that will decide the fate of colleges will be devised later. One does not have to guess

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about their nature; they will be prepared by the most influential academics. Or one can observe the tests they write now. Take, for example, the College Board's Advanced Placement Program, and specifically its *Teacher Guide, AP English Literature and Composition*.

> Today's English Literature departments are alive both with excitement and controversy. Nothing seems simple anymore, particularly where the introductory courses are concerned. There is little consensus among English teachers when it comes to goals, curriculum, approaches to literature, or even definitions of literature, or rather literatures....

There is no agreement, then, about the meaning of the thing that is being taught. Formerly, there was a more "robust regard for textual authority." Now,

> perhaps most importantly..."objectivity" and "factuality" have lost their preeminence. Instruction has become "less a matter of transmittal of an objective and culturally sanctioned body of knowledge," and more a matter of helping individuals learn to construct their own realities....

And finally:

> Contemporary educators no doubt hope students will shape values and ethical systems as they engage in these interactions, acquiring principles that will help them live in a mad, mad world.

Forget for a moment the selfishness, lassitude, and despair that are latent in this notion. The student is taught that the world is mad: find your own way, gentle child. If the text does not appeal to you, never mind. You are only looking for your own reality: a little thing, but thine own. Find what comfort you may in it. Little wonder that half the opinions of the Supreme Court today read as if the Constitution were unavailable to them. Little wonder that members of Congress write about education requirements *ad nauseam*, ignorant all the while of the great documents by which education was built in our country.

These will be the tests. College students will take them, and colleges who do not prepare their students to excel on them will be held up to ridicule and may be denied accreditation. Poor parents, whose children will be taught to devalue all that has bound their family together. Poor students, if they want to waste their time in the love of Milton or Aquinas or Plato.

Old Truths for New Urgencies

To repair all this and place the education system on a better footing, there are two things that need doing, neither of them proposed so far during this reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The first is that we should return control of college to private people to the utmost extent possible. The Federal government should do what Reagan suggested: go back to the things it has the constitutional power to do. As it withdraws, it should mimic the great acts of education support from our past, the Northwest Ordinance and its companion, the Land Ordinance of 1785, and the Morrill Act signed by Lincoln. It should decentralize authority to the states. Or even go one better. Let taxpayers keep their money, if they are prepared to spend it for something so vital to the public interest as education.

The second thing is to recover the tradition of liberal and civic education that has helped to keep us free by teaching us the purpose of our freedom. To do this, we will have to be willing to take positions on subjects that are "controversial." We will have to organize our colleges to study the great documents of the American past and those upon which that past was built. This will involve us—gasp—in the study of the Western canon. This is not merely a good thing, it is "urgent." The National Commission goes on at length about what is "urgent," but it forgets a point evident in this little paragraph from an influential man of our day:

> You are the nation who, rather than ruling by the Shariah of Allah in its Constitution and Laws, choose to invent your own laws as you will and desire. You separate religion from your policies, contradicting the pure nature which affirms Absolute Authority to the Lord and your Creator.

This is from a statement given to the American people by Osama bin Laden on November 24, 2002. He objects specifically to the thing that makes us what we are, the principles of civil and religious freedom. This man and his friends have killed more than 5,000 of us already. They seek weapons to kill us en masse. They offer us peace only if we agree that the right to make a law comes from appointment to their priesthood. Here is an urgent matter. We are in a war, likely to be a great and terrible war, a war for the central principles of our land. Perhaps we ought to study those principles. Then maybe we can remember the meaning of the doctrine that "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

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Essay by Barry Rubin

The Rise and Decline of al-Qaeda

Five years after September 11, al-Qaeda still exists. Osama bin Laden remains on the loose; the organization plays a leading role in the Iraqi insurgency; and the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, its leader there, brought worldwide headlines. Yet one cannot help feeling that it is a bit passé as an organization; so, too, bin Laden as a leader, and al-Qaeda's priority of attacking America as a jihadist tactic. New forces have largely shouldered them aside—Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, for instance, or the Muslim Brotherhood—and new strategies for obtaining power and influence point far beyond coordinated bombings to elections and drives for nuclear weapons. Hamas is running the Palestinian Authority and Hezbollah is in the Lebanese government coalition. Since their drubbing in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda has been homeless. Doubtless the group will continue plotting against the West, and from time to time we may confront such enormities as August's thwarted scheme to bring down ten airliners. But I believe al-Qaeda is, in 2006, largely a spent force.

Al-Qaeda remains the most extreme revolutionary Islamist movement, but it is hardly distinct in its beliefs or actions. Part of the problem with much writing on bin Laden and his group is that it treats them in relative isolation from the larger radical Islamist and Arab political milieus. But before turning to al-Qaeda and its context, let us briefly consider bin Laden the global terrorist entrepreneur.

There is little mystery here. Four factors shaped the individual who would become the world's most wanted man, with a $50 million bounty on his head. First, he was apparently a nice person, a critical if paradoxical point. He wanted to be kind and good and help people; he did not seek wealth or comfort for himself. His altruism not only made him willing and eager to suffer for his cause, but it also helped persuade others that he was a virtual holy man whose purity made him Islam's redeemer. Second, he was a fanatic who sought to be a perfect Muslim, to go further than others in the strictness of his observance and in his dedication. Compromise was, to him, betrayal. Third, he came from a fantastically wealthy family. Money made many things possible for him. But he was also spoiled in spiritual terms; he believed he could do anything and yield to no one. Finally, his understanding of Islam was at once radical and ignorant. He began as a Wahhabi, the most extreme sect within mainstream Islam, known for its intolerance and austerity. Yet his education, relatively modern by Saudi standards, deprived him of the kind of historically and hierarchically oriented instruction that a cleric receives. As a result, bin Laden came to believe that he could interpret Islam irrespective of historical practice or the rulings of most senior clerics.

The Rise of al-Qaeda

Peter Bergen's The Osama bin Laden I *Know* is a remarkable read. The author, familiar to many as CNN's terrorism analyst, is also a freelancer who has covered al-Qaeda for years, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation, and an adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. In his book he pieces together interviews, articles, and documents (usually extracts) to give a sequential view of bin Laden's development. While the constant switching of sources is somewhat jarring and not all are equally credible, the book certainly provides the clearest narrative account of bin Laden's life, surpassing other recent efforts like Jonathan Randal's *Osama: The Making of a Terrorist* (2004), Bruce Lawrence's *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (2005), or Michael Scheuer's *Through Our Enemies' Eyes* (2006).

While supporting the local insurgency in Afghanistan against the Soviet takeover, bin Laden enjoyed close links to the Saudi regime (and not, by the way, to U.S. intelligence, which worked directly only with the Afghans). He became intoxicated by the revolutionary atmosphere and resolved to turn the struggle into a much broader jihad, which he believed would, over time, transform the entire Muslim world. Al-Qaeda was founded just as the Afghan war was coming to an end and bin Laden was seeking new battlefields. According to a magazine he published to announce the founding of the group in 1988—cited in Bergen's book—"The vanguard constitutes the solid base [*al-Qaeda al-Sulbah*] for the expected society." Two years later, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, bin Laden tried to convince the Saudi rulers that they should depend on his international brigade and not on U.S. forces. Understandably, the Saudis preferred the American military to bin Laden's barely trained foot soldiers, whose service in Afghanistan had been marked by personal bravery but military incompetence.

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These events touched off the next phase of his career. He turned to overthrowing the existing regimes in the Arab world and other Muslim states (as had many other Islamists, some inspired by the Iranian revolution a decade earlier, others, like bin Laden, fighting what they perceived to be corrupt, apostate regimes). During the next few years, both in Sudan and back in Afghanistan, bin Laden built his organization, which benefited from the failure of Islamic revolutionary movements everywhere else. After Iran's 1979 revolution, Islamists expected quick victories across the Muslim world, but 27 years later, their only triumph in Arab lands had been a temporary one in Sudan. These movements lost not only because the regimes they opposed were too strong and clever, but because the Muslim masses did not embrace groups that attacked fellow Muslims rhetorically and physically.

Evaluating this history—but refusing to admit either defeat or unpopularity—the Egyptian Islamic Jihad leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, a doctor with little formal training in Islam but whose influence on bin Laden steadily increased, proposed a new idea: put the priority on attacking the West, especially America. The United States could not only be the scapegoat for everything that had gone wrong with the Muslim world, but now for the Islamist revolutionaries' defeats as well. Actually, the U.S. had almost nothing to do with these battles. But by the late 1990s, al-Qaeda had declared war on America, followed by several spectacular terrorist acts, culminating in September 11.

If terrorism within Arab countries proved futile in overthrowing regimes and installing al-Qaeda in power, perhaps terrorism against the West would mobilize enough support to make revolution at home a second step. One of the best expositions of this strategy was offered by al-Qaeda associate Abu Musab al-Suri, quoted in Bergen's book. Bin Laden, he explained, had two options. The first, to fight the Saudis, was "[a] losing battle in the eyes of the people due to the size and influence of the Saudi religious establishment that has planted legitimacy and prestige in the minds of the people for the past seventy years or more." The second, "safer route," was to attack the Americans. If the Saudis and their religious establishment defended these infidels, they would be discredited. With the second option, chosen by bin Laden, "[t]he battle will be on clearer grounds in the eyes of the people." Thus one of bin Laden's bodyguards, also quoted in Bergen, explained that the attacks on American targets were designed to "raise the morale of the Islamic nation.... They proved to the Islamic world a Muslim ability to break U.S. prestige and hegemony."

Although bin Laden's direct targeting of America was innovative, his ideology was mostly second-hand, stemming not only from other Islamists but from the very Arab regimes that he identified as his enemies. According to this too familiar doctrine, the cause of the Arab-Muslim world's relative weakness is (a) its abandonment of Arab and Islamic unity, and (b) the imperialist-Zionist conspiracy, which ceaselessly plots against Arab and Muslim interests. (Bin Laden, going even further, saw traditional Arab nationalist regimes as traitors and lackeys.) Thus only Arab unity and Muslim jihad could overthrow corrupt regimes, destroy Israel, and exorcise Western influence from the region.

This brand of thinking is still broadcast daily across the Arab world by regimes, media, schools, clerics, and virtually every other institution, with only the rarest voice of refutation. The utility in such conspiracy thinking is to explain away the failures of Arab regimes to achieve victory or progress; in addition, insofar as a regime pledges to fight the enemy, it mobilizes mass support for itself. But as the years passed and the nationalist regimes did not make good on their promises, the Islamist, anti-nationalist variety of this thinking grew in influence. It is impossible to understand bin Laden and al-Qaeda without this context.

Books discussed in this essay:

The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al Qaeda's Leader, by Peter L. Bergen. Free Press, 480 pages, $26 (cloth), $15 (paper)

Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World, by J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins. Cambridge University Press, 368 pages, $30

Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against the West, by Walid Phares. Palgrave Macmillan, 288 pages, $24.95 (cloth), $14.95 (paper)

Follow the Money

J. MILLARD BURR, A FORMER STATE DEPARTment official who has worked with international charities for more than four decades, and Robert O. Collins, a retired history professor from the University of California, Santa Barbara—authors of *Alms for Jihad*—have written a detailed, comprehensive, and indeed definitive study on how jihad is financed around the world. They observe that there are more than 6,000 Islamic charities globally—in Arab lands, Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America—ranging from small personal funds to giant foundations. Only 14 such institutions have been associated directly with al-Qaeda. But, the authors explain, "[i]t is not the number of Islamic charities devoted to Islamist and jihadist terrorism, but their size, outreach, and above all their wealth that has enabled them to have a significant international impact far out of proportion to their numbers...."

There is a lot of first-rate research and analysis in the book, especially in its tracing of Saudi charities, including those sponsored by government agencies. One technique used by jihadists before September 11 was to staff official or semi-official charities and thus ensure that the money went to their colleagues. Meanwhile, despite Israeli warnings and intelligence about how much money was being raised for terrorism even from within the U.S., the Clinton Administration refused to act; it was "reluctant to initiate investigations of any Islamic charities that could precipitate charges of religious bigotry and accusations of ethnic discrimination...." In 2000-2001 alone, one U.S. charity paid out $650,000 to radical Islamists in the Balkans.

Only after September 11 did the U.S. move energetically to staunch this flow, and only after a terrorist campaign began against the Saudi regime in 2003 was Riyadh willing to lift a finger. (Nonetheless, the export of Saudi "charity" money to support foreign jihadist movements continues.) A raid on the Bosnian office of one Islamic charity in March 2002 uncovered a secret organization called the Golden Chain, consisting of 20 wealthy al-Qaeda backers. These donor businessmen and bankers—officials at the top Saudi banks—had an estimated net worth of over $85 billion. A third of them sent their contributions directly to Osama bin Laden. Of special interest is the authors' examination of Islamist charities in Europe, where the network has reached enormous proportions.

Burr and Collins do an admirable job. They take an extremely complex issue and explain it clearly, telling a fascinating story in a scholarly manner. What is most impressive, they do so without any sensationalizing and with a keen grasp of Islamic principles underlying charitable giving. This book is highly recommended.

Walid Phares, a terrorism analyst for MSNBC and senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, takes a somewhat different tack in his *Future Jihad*. He focuses on al-Qaeda's operations against the U.S. and how America can cope with the threat. His book is especially useful in detailing the denial of radical Islamism's threat before September 11 by "a large segment of the academic and diplomatic circles" of the United States. He explains how this weakened America's ability both to

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understand jihadism and to defend against it. Even a half decade after the attacks, these same forces of denial continue to apologize for and minimize the threat.

A basic question still needs, however, to be answered. How well does bin Laden actually understand U.S. policy in the Islamic world? If other people in the region are any indication, probably very poorly. American policies are continually distorted by every Arab and Iranian institution, almost without exception. To select two from hundreds of examples: to this day, Egyptian schoolchildren are taught that U.S. planes attacked their country in 1967 and destroyed their air force; and Egyptian newspapers routinely claim that all terrorism in Iraq is sponsored by the U.S. in order to divide Sunni and Shia. The chief grudge that Islamists have against American policy—and here they see shrewdly—is explained by Phares: "The main force preventing jihadists from taking over Muslim governments remains the United States.... Paralyzing the American capacity to intervene worldwide would allow the Islamists to overrun their foes and implement their plans."

The Decline of al-Qaeda

How likely is al-Qaeda to realize its ambitions? The answer is far less clear than it is for other Islamist groups. Today, everywhere except among Iraqi Sunnis and in Saudi Arabia, the Islamist struggle is not conducted by transnational al-Qaedists, but by local groups: Hamas, Hezbollah, Jordan's Islamic Action Front, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria, and others. How, then, has al-Qaeda lost its position as the "vanguard" of world Islamic revolution? First, its war on America has had limited results, especially considering its failure to perpetrate any attacks here since September 11. Moreover, its transnational approach prevents it from gaining a strong foothold in any particular country. Its insistence on armed struggle as its sole tactic also limits its appeal and ability to maneuver, ensuring that it remains a terrorist threat, but not a political one. It does not help that its leaders lack Islamic credentials—even the clerics who provide it with support are mostly second-rate. Finally, many radical Islamists criticize al-Qaeda for letting Arab regimes off the hook by abandoning domestic revolutionary efforts (except in Saudi Arabia).

The case of Iraq, where al-Qaeda is apparently most significant, proves these points. The late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian street thug turned Islamist revolutionary thug, did not have very impressive Islamic credentials compared to, say, Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi, a senior Muslim Brotherhood mentor. When Zarqawi denounced participation in elections as an act of defiance against God—implied in democracy's rule of the people as opposed to the rule of God—Qaradawi, himself an endorser of terrorism and with views quite close to those of al-Qaeda, suggested that the Islamists would be fools not to run in elections if they thought victory was possible. Zarqawi also expanded his jihad in Iraq into a crusade against Kurds and Shia, who compose 80% of that country's population. Not only did this undercut any general anti-American insurgency, it exposed the Sunni minority to massacre should the communal civil war he sought ever come to pass. In effect, Zarqawi's strategy pushed the Shia and Kurds into the arms of America.

Two other developments demonstrate how al-Qaeda has been superseded both as a model Islamist organization and as the world's prime instigator of Islamic terrorism. First is Hezbollah's success in initiating a war with Israel, then surviving Israel's onslaught. This will make Hezbollah—a state-within-a-state, composed of trained terrorists-cum-soldiers, armed by Syria and Iran, fielding its own spokesmen and television channels—a model for future groups. A second development is the frightening proliferation of tiny, homegrown terrorist cells in European cities. In these cases, Muslim immigrants or their children imbibe al-Qaeda's ideology from afar (perhaps over the internet), then take up the sword of jihad independently of al-Qaeda's hierarchy. Not only in London but also in Canada and Germany, young Muslims, born and raised in those countries, sometimes even native converts, have been apprehended while planning a terrorist attack.

Al-Qaeda is surviving, as we were reminded in August. It is still able to stir passions and it is indifferent to losses. Every defeat is proclaimed a victory. Yet General Patton was right: the goal of war is not to die for your country but to make your enemy die for his. Bin Laden inaugurated the global Islamist movement and was essential to disseminating its hideous ideas. Today, however, the various Muslim Brotherhood offshoots like Hamas, and Shia Islamist groups like Hezbollah, have a much brighter future than al-Qaeda. They focus on one country and know how to maneuver tactically. Al-Qaeda makes for a lot of disruption and violence, but it will never rule anywhere. Bin Laden may become a martyr, but he will never be a political leader.

Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs *(MERIA). His latest books include* The Long War for Freedom: The Arab Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East *(John Wiley & Sons) and* The Tragedy of the Middle East *(Cambridge University Press).*

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Book Review by Charles Geshekter

Beating Ploughshares into Swords

The Fate of Africa: From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair, by Martin Meredith. PublicAffairs, 752 pages, $35

Africa is the least developed and hungriest continent on earth. Its 54 countries, comprising 680 million people with a great diversity of habitats, ethnolinguistic affiliations, colonial heritages, and local cultures, cluster consistently at the bottom in rankings of income, school enrollments, civil rights, and health. With 13% of the world's population, Africa accounts for less than 2% of global trade; and roughly 75% of its people live on less than $2 a day.

It wasn't always this way. During the 1960s, Africa's myriad peoples enjoyed improvements in education, declines in death rates, increased life expectancy, and a new infrastructure of roads, ports, and railways. But despite these and shared "hopes of freedom," in the succeeding decades war, famine, banditry, and mass murder afflicted countries across the continent. To explain this wretched cavalcade, British journalist and historian Martin Meredith focuses on the grotesque, high-level corruption of Africa's leaders, who systematically fleeced their populations while squandering foreign aid.

Relying on personal memoirs, African-studies scholarship, and his own experiences, Meredith reconstructs the historical forces and personalities that caused Africa's postcolonial descent. Each chapter in *The Fate of Africa* oozes with examples of rank dishonesty and disregard for law. The accounts of the Rwandan genocide, the savage children's wars of Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the homicidal thuggery in Uganda, Congo, Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea are particularly grim.

Although the bitter history of European colonialism will never absolve African tyrants of responsibility for their crimes, Meredith could have laid more blame for today's suffering on the legacy of imperialism. As it is, he observes that colonial administrations often were conceived in violence and maintained by more of the same. They were not run for the benefit of their inhabitants, and hardly provided a model of good government. Consequently, he argues, many early African nationalists regarded the state "as a foreign institution that could be used for personal and community gain without any sense of shame or need for accountability." These habits replicated themselves among African elites long after the colonial authorities had departed.

Nonetheless, it was the Africans themselves who produced three generations of demagogues, "flamboyant replacements of the old colonial order," in the words of Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka. The book provides fascinating, occasionally hilarious biographies of Africa's deplorable "Big Men," like Francisco Nguema of Equatorial Guinea and Jean-Bedel Bokassa of Central African Republic, who imagined themselves to be infallible and invincible, even protected by supernatural forces. In summarizing the extent of personal and professional corruption, Meredith leaves no doubt that African countries have regressed strikingly over the past decades thanks to massive graft, patronage networks, and bureaucracies packed with cronies, crooks, and the functionally illiterate.

Other parts of Africa became proxy battlefields for Cold War conflicts. Corruption and embezzlement afflicted every country that competed for superpower attention because Cold War patrons rarely demanded accountability, only loyalty. In Somalia, for instance, local politicians played a dangerous, high-stakes game of trying to manipulate *both* superpowers. Once the Cold War ended and Somalia lost its geopolitical allure, the Russian and American ambassadors fled the war-torn capital of Mogadishu in 1990 aboard the same helicopter. A year later, the long, intravenous financial drip line that had stretched from Western capitals into Somalia's arm was yanked, and the country collapsed.

The chapters on Haile Selassie's overthrow in Ethiopia and on his Marxist successor, Mengistu Haile Meriam, offer a gripping account of the implosion of Africa's oldest continuous monarchy after it failed to deal with famine, droughts, and internal demands for political reform and democratization. The revolution turned sour under Mengistu, who initiated a brutal campaign to silence critics. The Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s was caused by further severe droughts, state-run agricultural boards that depressed prices for peasant products, and Men-

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gistu's scorched-earth policy against his anti-Communist enemies. As a result, a country that had been one of Africa's legendary food producers became a mass of ragged, starving beggars. By 1984, 5 million people were at risk of starvation while Mengistu continued to maintain his huge army of 300,000 soldiers. In Meredith's words, "inflicting hunger became a key military strategy." Eventually, a million Ethiopians perished. An eyewitness BBC account, broadcast in October 1984, caused a wave of international horror. Oblivious to the regime's systematic corruption, the Irish pop singer Bob Geldof (with his fund-raising single, "Do They Know It's Christmas?") joined "USA for Africa" efforts by Harry Belafonte, Michael Jackson, and Lionel Richie (with their song, "We Are the World"). Together, they raised over $1 billion for relief assistance.

Many African leaders insisted that their one-party states were needed to forge national unity, but what they actually produced was national misery. In Guinea, Sekou Toure's economic strategies helped ruin a country known for its wealth of bauxite and iron ore. Tanzania, in the 1970s, received $3 billion in foreign aid; yet by 1981 Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere was forced to admit that his country was "poorer now than we were in 1972." In the Congo, Joseph Mobutu stole a fortune in property and investments (estimated to be worth $5 billion) from the national budget and state mining revenues. Meanwhile, Congolese "[h]ospitals closed for lack of medicine and equipment.... A fraction of the rural road network remained usable for motor traffic...[and] the level of employment was lower than...[at] independence."

MEREDITH RECKONS THAT "MORE THAN $300 billion of Western aid has been sunk into Africa...with little discernible result," yet somehow believes that "the prospects of Africa escaping from precipitous decline remain heavily dependent on western assistance." How would that work, exactly? He admits that he does not know, because "the sum of Africa's misfortunes...presents a crisis of such magnitude that it goes beyond the reach of foreseeable solutions. At the core of the crisis is the failure of African leaders to provide effective government."

There may, however, be cause for hope. After the Cold War, Africans began to challenge their predatory rulers by demanding economic and political reforms and launching grassroots non-governmental organizations. Today, there is talk of "an African renaissance," as government leaders here and there encourage private investment, reduce state intervention, and denounce military regimes. One-party systems have been dismantled in Mali and Zambia, and some dictators (Mengistu, Samuel Doe, and Siyad Barre) have been killed or ousted. But the continent has a long way to go: when Senegalese President Abdou Diouf was defeated in an election in 2000, he became only the fourth African peacefully turned out of office in 40 years. In 2004, the British High Commissioner in Kenya claimed that the "names of honest ministers and senior officials" in that country "would fit on the back of a postage stamp."

The African Union has established new goals for its members, calling for transparency, accountability, fiscal and economic discipline, respect for human rights, and the empowerment of women. We wish them well. In the meantime, there are many modest, sensible things that donors *can* do to ameliorate suffering—e.g., purchase and make available mosquito nets, distribute oral rehydration solutions to prevent infant diarrhea, and provide inexpensive micronutrients. But Africa will never be "saved" by Western philanthropy. Africans themselves must eliminate their dictators, and enable citizens who work hard and honestly to improve their lot.

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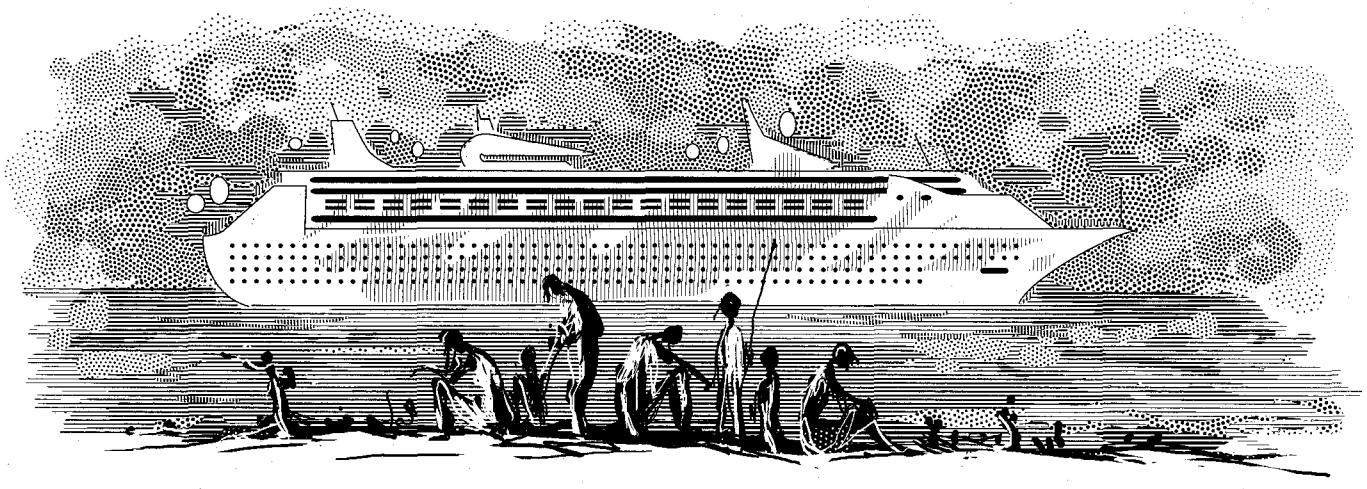
Book Review by Gerard Alexander

The Cost of Good Intentions

The White Man's Burden: Why The West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good, by William Easterly. Penguin Press, 400 pages, $27.95



A TRAGEDY OF OUR WORLD IS THAT HUNdreds of millions of people perform backbreaking labor but still live in dire poverty. Through no fault of their own, young lives are regularly cut down by malnutrition, disease, and predators called presidents. Our ancestors lived no better, to be sure, and sometimes worse. But the survival of such poverty into our times is a heartbreaking reality, one that tugs at the conscience. The problem is that we don't know what to do about it, though that has not stopped us from trying.

In his important new book, *The White Man's Burden*, William Easterly estimates that advanced industrialized countries gave one *trillion* dollars in official development assistance (measured in constant 1985 dollars) to poor countries between 1950 and 1995. And that doesn't include billions more in subsidized loans, forgiven debt, and private charity (the latter an especially significant source of American giving). This has been one of the most ambitious collective aid projects in human history, and also, sadly, one of the most ineffectual.

Having cut his teeth as a World Bank economist, Easterly is able to provide a true insider's guide to what went wrong. In his first book, *The Elusive Quest for Growth* (2001), Easterly described the long series of economic-development theories that informed successive anti-poverty policies from the 1940s on. At first the economists thought the problem was mere lack of technical expertise, and so they urged rich countries to share their technology. When this did not produce the desired result, economists suggested that the real problem was lack of investment in machinery and other "means of production." When this also failed to do the trick, they shifted their focus to reforms in government, e.g., reducing corruption. They introduced the idea of "structural adjustment" programs that offered loans in return for political improvements. But when many countries failed to implement genuine reform and couldn't pay back the loans, donors often forgave the debt anyway, which only served to reward the recipients' bad faith and bad policies.

The record suggests that the development economists never got it right, but this hardly slowed them down. As each theory succumbed to bitter experience, they replaced it with another. By contrast, Easterly seems to have taken away exactly the right lesson, that we should be skeptical of all such theories in this area. As he points out in *The White Man's Burden*, the foreign aid community's "utopian agendas" are as intellectually arrogant as they are operationally doomed.

The urgency of this message cannot be exaggerated, since massive international aid schemes frequently have downright deleterious effects. We now know (as some wise minds had reason to anticipate) that in many cases our large-scale aid plans assisted corrupt and abusive despots to outfit militaries and co-opt leading reformers. Their unjust rule was deepened and perpetuated by our aid programs, while their already weak economies were made even more dysfunctional.

Easterly doesn't flinch from citing studies suggesting that foreign aid, above certain levels, is associated with negative effects on growth. He tackles the issue of whether failure pre-dated aid—whether aid got sent to places because they were already disasters, instead of aid causing the disasters—and concludes that, in any event, large-scale aid seldom helps. Some major aid recipients never improve (some even get worse). Most of the recent success stories are countries "that did *not* get a lot of foreign aid and did *not* spend a lot of time in IMF [International Monetary Fund] programs."

NOW, IF A LOT OF THIS SOUNDS FAmiliar, it should. Over four decades ago, the political scientist Edward C. Banfield warned that the reigning "doctrines" of foreign aid would prove counterproductive, underestimating the many prerequisites of development and overestimating our own ability to address these problems. Not long afterward, the economist Peter Bauer warned that government-to-government development assistance tended to politicize economies, fuel growth-choking bureaucracies, and retard development, protracting the poverty of millions. Since then, dozens of market-oriented scholars and commentators have expanded on Banfield's and Bauer's warnings and applied them to specific countries and development projects.

Beyond adding to that line of argument, Easterly has a positive case to make. We should not necessarily throw up our hands just because hugely transformational projects are fruitless

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and even dangerous. Our mistake has been to pursue grandiose goals with the tools at hand, however unsuitable. Instead, we should ask first what tools are available and then how best to use them.

So what are our tools? We have an abundance of money and technology, certainly. But we lack knowledge of poor economies, communities, and families, as well as of the effects of different kinds of assistance. Our knowledge is limited in part because distant bureaucracies have few mechanisms for getting feedback from the people they're trying to help—and lack incentives to improve that information, much less to get outcomes right.

Our knowledge is limited, too, because of the complexity of the processes of economic growth. Even industrialization in the West remains mysterious; we don't know exactly which conditions favored its emergence. As Easterly puts it, "The fallacy is to assume that because I have studied and lived in a society that somehow wound up with prosperity and peace, I know enough to plan for other societies to have prosperity and peace." Now, we can guess that things like the rule of law mattered in Western economic history. But that's a satisfactory answer only until we remember that the emergence of the rule of law required still other conditions, and we don't really know what those were.

So what is to be done? We should be cautious, set modest goals, experiment, and avoid schemes that rely on many moving parts. In Easterly's words: "The right plan is to have no plan." So in telling the story of foreign aid, if the black hats are worn by those whom Easterly calls "Planners," the white hats are the "Searchers," people who have "knowledge of local conditions, experimental results from interventions, and some way to get feedback from the poor." Searchers assume (unlike Planners) that the world's complexity outpaces our insights, and are content to look for incremental improvements. The way forward is to accept that "there is no automatic formula for success," and that only "piecemeal improvements" are likely. By setting their sights right, by aiming "to make individuals better off, not to transform governments or societies," Searchers can tangibly improve the quality of people's lives. For example, Easterly likes programs that pay poor parents to keep their children in school, especially schoolgirls in some traditional societies. This isn't a master plan for a national economy. But it could very gradually expand the number of citizens with better economic prospects.

Our limited knowledge, the problem of unintended consequences, the need for caution—this, too, should sound familiar. Beginning in the 1960s, neoconservatives argued on precisely these terms against large-scale social engineering, advising policymakers to adopt a more humble approach. And the Austrian school of economists, too, has long argued that ignorance is a pervasive problem in social planning. You'd never uncover any of this intellectual debt from Easterly's pages, but his critique of foreign aid is so needed that he can be forgiven the curious conceit of having invented humility.

The book's most innovative moments come when he discusses politics, not economics. First, he argues that functioning free markets emerge as the result of many accumulated actions, and can't be created by administrative fiat. "Shock" transitions to capitalism strike him as just as implausible as abrupt industrialization. Second, he rejects the notion that since sustained economic growth presupposes good government and the rule of law, we should go into the good-government business. That, too, is beyond our capacities. "Western intervention in the government of the Rest, whether during colonization or decolonization, has been on the far side of unhelpful."

This sort of language, imparting these sorts of lessons, has made Easterly an inviting target for professional economic developmentalists. Jeffrey Sachs, for example, in a recent issue of *The Lancet*, rejects Easterly's call for lowering our sights, and lists nine major achievements of large-scale international intervention. Eight of the nine achievements concern health care (such as the eradication of smallpox) and the other is "the spread of high-yield variety seeds." Sachs's list is revealing. These are largely feats of technology, accomplished in labs by small numbers of professionals, then paired with field operations that were in many cases either one-time events or involved very precise objectives. None of the nine consumed the huge budgets and bureaucracies that characterize the economic-development industry. None is meant to achieve the sustained economic progress hoped for by development economists, and none involves the grandiose imagery of Sachs's recent book, *The End of Poverty* (2005). If anything, the nine items on Sachs's list are more consistent with Easterly's message: each involved the use of feasible means to tackle what amounted to small parts of the poverty puzzle.

But the real validation for Easterly—as well as for Edward Banfield, Peter Bauer, the neocons, and the Austrian economists—is in front of our nose. Well, it's in front of my nose: it's the computer screen on which I'm writing these words. The screen is sleek and new, and it was made in a country that just 30 years ago was in economic ruins. I'm talking about China. But after decades of stagnation and disaster, China's economy experienced a striking shift toward rapid growth in the 1980s. This shift coincided with a change in government policies, a change in the direction of economic freedom. It's true that such freedom required a state strong enough to enforce de facto property rights. But the combination of an effective state and economic liberty unleashed tens of millions of "Searchers" in China whose names, until then, were unknown even to themselves. These Chinese citizens have improved their lives—and only coincidentally their country's economy—through one incremental decision after another, decisions concerning employment, risk-taking, education, and much else. In the process, more people in China have been lifted out of dire poverty, and in less time, than in any comparable episode in history. And foreign aid had absolutely nothing to do with it.

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Book Review by R. Shep Melnick

The $10,000 Solution?

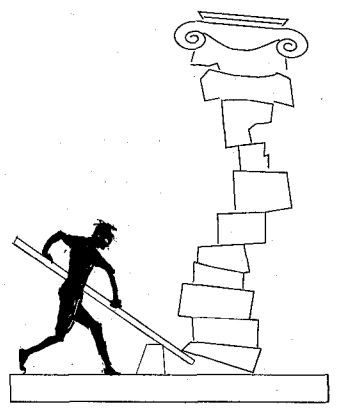
In Our Hands: A Plan to Replace the Welfare State, by Charles Murray. AEI Press, 140 pages, $20

Remember George McGovern's "demogrant"? During his ill-fated 1972 presidential campaign, he proposed a government grant of $1,000 to every American. Conservatives quickly derided the handout, which became another nail in the coffin of McGovern's quest for the presidency.

Now the plan is back, this time promising $10,000 annually to every citizen over the age of 21. And strangely enough, the champion of this new guaranteed income proposal is Charles Murray, the author of *Losing Ground*, *What It Means to be a Libertarian*, and *The Bell Curve*. Despised by latter-day McGovernites, Murray has in his latest manifesto borrowed a page from the Left's old playbook. Like liberals of the 1960s and 1970s, he sees universal grants as a great way to kill the paternalistic, intrusive, and self-serving welfare bureaucracy, and to eliminate the inherently complex "means test" that creates so many perverse incentives while stigmatizing welfare clients. The point of his proposal, Murray explains, is to take money from the government and give it directly "to the people." Although he relies primarily on libertarian arguments, he hopes "to extend a hand across the political divide between libertarians and social democrats, offering a compromise that provides generous assistance for dealing with human needs without entailing the suffocating and soulless welfare state."

The main elements of Murray's proposal, which he dubs, somewhat unimaginatively, "the Plan," are deliberately simple. Every American citizen over age 21 would receive $10,000 annually from the federal government. When a recipient's earned income reached $25,000, a 20% surtax would be imposed on the grant—which means that the grant would be reduced by $1,000 for every $5,000 of earned income over $25,000. The surtax would be capped at $5,000, leaving everyone earning more than $50,000 with a $5,000 grant. He would require all recipients to purchase health insurance, which he claims would cost about $3,000. In order to make health insurance available at this cost, he would institute wide-ranging changes in the American health care system, including eliminating all medical licensing laws and substantially reducing opportunities to file medical malpractice claims. He suggests, too, that the government might require recipients to put $2,000 of the annual grant into a retirement plan.

To finance the Plan, which he estimates would cost about $2 trillion per year, Murray would eliminate the entire American welfare state. To make sure that it did not grow back he would enact a constitutional amendment declaring that the government—federal, state, and local—"shall make no law nor establish any program that provides benefits to some citizens but not to others." Among the programs slated for elimination are the big-ticket contributory programs, Social Security and Medicare, along with unemployment compensation, workers' comp, and veterans' benefits. Murray would bid a not-so-fond adieu to all means-tested programs as well: Medicaid, TANF (Temporary



Assistance for Needy Families), food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Supplemental Security Income, Pell Grants, general assistance, housing aid, and much more. And he would kill off other programs he dislikes, including all agricultural subsidies, the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and most of the "corporate welfare" programs of the Departments of Commerce, Energy, and Transportation. According to Murray, our government has become so bloated and inefficient that we can make everyone in the country financially secure by writing checks rather than running programs.

In Our Hands is a stimulating and useful book because it confronts a basic question: what do we want from the welfare state? Murray emphasizes that we want not only to provide a "safety net" for those facing temporary or involuntary setbacks, but also to promote certain personal habits and character traits (especially industriousness, self-restraint, and willingness to take responsibility for our own lives and for our children). Indeed, the most interesting chapters of the book are those in which he explains how the Plan will provide economic security to all without discouraging work or encouraging out-of-wedlock births. It is in these chapters, in particular, that Murray compels us to think through the connections between economic incentives, social outcomes, and individual character traits. Many readers might disagree with Murray's conclusions, but they will undoubtedly be fascinated and impressed by his many clever arguments.

In Our Hands demonstrates Murray's special knack for explaining complex matters in simple, engaging prose. One example of this is his discussion of what he calls the "Doolittle Effect," named after the lovable Alfie Doolittle character in *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*. Murray explains that under the Plan, benefits are structured so as to "lure people into working until they are making so much money that they cannot afford to quit." Recipients face no reduction in their grant until they earn $25,000. Who would give up a $26,000 job because his grant was reduced by $200? That would mean going from a total income of $35,800 to $10,000—quite a drop in one's standard of living. Similarly, Murray argues that because no one gets a payment until turning 21, and because young women without children receive as much as those with children, the Plan will reduce the number of young, unmarried mothers.

Despite its many virtues, Murray's book is not without serious flaws. His proposals are vulnerable to many practical and economic objections. More fundamentally, Murray seems to forget what Daniel Patrick Moynihan called the "central conservative truth," namely that "it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society." And he embraces an exaggerated version of "the central liberal truth" that "politics can change a culture to save it from itself."

Murray's book will stimulate a lively debate among budget experts over whether his numbers add up. He makes a plausible argument that by the year 2011 the cost of the programs eliminated will exceed the cost of the Plan. He points out that it will be much easier to control spending under the Plan than with existing programs, especially those pertaining to health

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care. The success of Murray's scheme for lifting everyone out of poverty, though, rests in large part on the consequences of his proposal to deregulate health care. A great deal of what Murray denigrates as "wasteful government spending" pays for Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans' health benefits. Yet if health care costs continue to soar, notwithstanding Murray's proposed deregulation of health care, most of the Plan's $10,000 grant would go to buying health insurance alone.

Of course, the truth is that we will never learn how well the Plan will work, since as a political matter it has no chance whatsoever of being enacted. It is guaranteed to generate enormous political opposition: every interest group, public administrator, and legislator would oppose it, insofar as the Plan would drastically reduce their ability to serve their clients and constituents. And who would support the Plan? Not current or future recipients of Social Security and Medicare. Not farmers or Native Americans or veterans or employees of the medical-industrial complex. If you thought it was hard selling partial privatization of Social Security, wait until you try persuading them to eliminate Social Security and Medicare and everything else!

Early in the book Murray concedes this point and urges the reader "to suspend disbelief and play along." He presents the book as a useful "thought experiment" rather than as a political program. By the end of the book, though, he claims that "something very like the Plan is politically *inevitable*—not next year, but sometime" (emphasis added). Why? Because the more government expands, the more evident its incompetence becomes: "By the time the government begins trying to administer to complex human needs, it is far out of its depth.... The limited competence of government is inherent. At some point in this century, that too will become a consensus understanding."

Those who belong to the church of libertarianism will no doubt find this argument convincing. Those of us not dedicated to that faith must ask for more evidence. Given the centrality of Murray's claim that government bureaucracies are inherently ineffective and wasteful, one would expect a careful comparison of public bureaucracy with what he calls "private philanthropy." But on this topic Murray offers only slogans. The pejorative term "bureaucracy" is conveniently reserved for public agencies. The United Way, Catholic Charities, and the Ford Foundation, he seems to imply, seldom suffer from the pathologies of bureaucratization. Anyone who has worked for a large corporation or private university (or for that matter read Max Weber) knows that non-governmental organizations can be "bureaucratic," too.

In his brief discussion of public bureaucracy, Murray claims that "bureaucracies must by their nature be morally indifferent." Really? To be blunt, this claim is preposterous. American welfare programs for years were decried as "moralistic"—which meant they imposed a form of morality disliked by critics. In his well-known study of police departments, James Q. Wilson demonstrated that many "street-level bureaucrats" cannot *avoid* making moral judgments on a daily basis. One reason for the success of the 1996 welfare reform act is that it allowed state and local welfare bureaucracies to impose norms, not just neutrally hand out money "as a matter of right."

Murray's deep-seated distrust of government not only drives him to endorse policies previously championed by the Left, but also leads him to part company with conservative advocates of "paternalistic" post-1996 welfare reform. Those interested in understanding divergent strains of contemporary conservatism should compare Murray's libertarian attack on the welfare state with Lawrence Mead's vigorous defense of Wisconsin's welfare-to-work program in *Government Matters: Welfare Reform in Wisconsin* (2004). Relying on extensive empirical evidence, Mead argues that Wisconsin's highly competent, innovative, and morality-imposing welfare bureaucracy succeeded in turning thousands of long-term welfare recipients into active participants in labor markets, giving them skills and support not provided by the private sector. Ironically, Murray's first book, *Losing Ground*, played an important role in building political support for the paternalistic welfare regime that Mead celebrates and that has become a hallmark of contemporary conservative efforts to reform the welfare state.

Conservatives should also find Murray's proposal to institute his plan through constitutional amendment disconcerting. His constitutional revision would strip state and local governments of their most important functions and powers, fundamentally changing the nature of American federalism.

Underlying Murray's notably un-conservative proposal to remake American government is his belief that almost every problem in modern life is a product of the perverse incentives created by the welfare state. How to explain the decline of religious belief so apparent in Europe? Blame the welfare state, says Murray: "Give people plenty and security, and they will fall into spiritual torpor." Ditto the decline of marriage: "The current decline in marriage is not a function of modernity, but of the welfare state. The welfare state systematically competes with the natural attraction to marriage." Declining social capital? He finds a "causal connection of great importance" between growth of the welfare state and decline of private philanthropy and neighborliness.

Not surprisingly, Murray claims that once the Plan replaces the welfare state "the effects on civil life will be transforming." The "momentous effect of the Plan" will be "the revitalization of the institutions through which people live satisfying lives." Religion and marriage will flourish again. Once individuals are given the minimum resources needed to succeed in life and are forced to recognize that their fate is "in their own hands," our cultural malaise will come to an end.

Well, perhaps. But many conservatives will be less confident that a change in the welfare state—even a change as radical as Murray proposes—will so fundamentally and abruptly transform our social mores. Here it is instructive to compare him with the most famous student of American mores, Alexis de Tocqueville. Like Murray, Tocqueville believed that the rise of a centralized, powerful, and bureaucratic nanny state would go hand-in-hand with the decline of religion, private associations, and the family. But for Tocqueville—unlike Murray—this "soft despotism" was not the primary *cause* of the corruption of morals, which lay rather in the thoroughgoing democratic individualism of our age.

According to Tocqueville, the United States managed to avoid the worst diseases that afflict Europe not because its government was small but because it was decentralized (and thus encouraged citizens' participation) and never united church and state (which inevitably corrupts and discredits religion). For Tocqueville, individualism was a dangerous modern conceit, one that religion, government institutions, families, and customs must together seek to tame and redirect. Murray's sole objective, in contrast, is precisely to unleash individualism. To be sure, he discusses the role of virtue, self-restraint, and responsibility to others, but unlike Tocqueville he is supremely confident that families, markets, and informal social networks will take care of such things if government just gets out of the way. Indeed, according to Murray, we need not even worry about the lingering effects of welfare state mores: the incentives provided by the Plan combined with the natural goodness of man will quickly right our culture. In marked contrast to Tocqueville, Murray is a populist at heart.

In Our Hands is a provocative book that will help us all to think more clearly about things we usually take for granted. No one need worry about the Plan becoming government policy. But liberals should ponder why parts of Murray's proposal seem so attractive to them. And conservatives should think hard about how much of Charles Murray's underlying analysis they are willing to credit.

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Essay by Peter W. Schramm

Born American, But in the Wrong Place

On October 23, 1956, students gathered at the foot of Sandor Petofi's statue in Budapest and read his poem "Rise, Magyar!" made famous in the democratic revolution of 1848. Workers, and even soldiers, soon joined the students. The demonstrators took over the state-run radio station and the Communist Party offices and toppled a huge statue of Stalin, dragging it through the streets. Rebellion spread throughout the country. The demonstrators—now Freedom Fighters—held Soviet occupation forces at bay for several days.

On November 1, the Hungarian Prime Minister announced that Hungary would withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. At dawn, November 4, the Soviets launched a major invasion of Hungary, in an offensive involving tens of thousands of additional troops, air and artillery assaults, and 6,000 tanks. A heroic resistance was crushed in less than a week.

The last free Hungarian radio broadcast spent its final hours repeating the Gettysburg Address in seven languages, followed by an S.O.S. Over 20,000 Hungarians were tried and sentenced for participation in the uprising, hundreds receiving the death sentence. An estimated 200,000 Hungarians—of a population of nine million—became refugees. Forty-seven thousand came to the United States. Hungary became a member of NATO on March 12, 1999.

In October 1956, my parents, my four-year-old sister, and I shared a small apartment with my father's parents and his brother on the plaza near the eastern railroad station in Budapest. I was two months shy of my tenth birthday when the Hungarian Revolution began.

Because the revolutionaries had taken over the railroad station, the Soviets positioned several tanks in our neighborhood, and we could not leave our apartment. There was heavy fighting, and bodies were strewn everywhere; one lay just outside our window for several days. After a week and a half, the action moved elsewhere and we could once again venture outdoors—carefully. Walking around one day, I came upon a Russian personnel carrier that was stacked with skeletons. It seemed that each was covered with about two inches of black velvet. I later learned that these poor souls had been burned alive by a Molotov cocktail.

It soon became clear that though the Soviets had pulled out of our immediate area, they were winning. The Revolution was going to be defeated, and they would be back. Things were going to get more unpleasant than ever, and Hungary had not been a pleasant place for the Schramms for quite a long time.

My father, William, was born in 1922, into a politically tumultuous Hungary produced by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I. His father, an active participant in the 1919 Communist revolution, was hounded by the Fascists then ruling Hungary. By the time my father reached his teens, the Depression hit, followed by another world war. My father was placed in the air artillery. He liked it there, he said, because they could pretend to shoot down American planes, knowing that the B-17s were flying well out of range. They couldn't hurt the good guys, yet they did their duty. That was as good as life got in those days.

The war's end brought little relief. When the Communists took control of the country in 1949, they "expropriated" my parents' little textile shop (about half the size of my current living room) and everything in it. Under this new tyranny, my parents were considered part of the dangerous "bourgeoisie." In that same year, the Communists sentenced my father's father to ten years hard labor for having a small American flag in his possession (by that time he had been a leader of the social democrats for some years). At his "trial" he was asked why he had the flag. Was he a spy? He replied that it represented freedom better than any other symbol he knew, and that he had a right to have it. My father tried then, for the first time, to persuade my mother, Rose, to leave the country. But ties to family and friends were too strong, and she could not bear to do it. Soon, my father himself was sentenced to a year of prison for "rumor mongering" (someone claimed he had called a Communist a tyrant, which he had). When he got out, he washed windows for a while and made illegal whiskey to make ends meet as best he could.

My grandfather got an early release from the labor camp in 1956 and came back to us looking like a victim of the Holocaust. Still, the first thing he wanted to know was whether we still had the flag. Of course, we did not. It had long ago been confiscated. But my father didn't want to break his father's heart and had somehow managed to secure another one. We took it out of its hiding place and, at that tender age, I learned the very adult lesson of the complexity of telling the truth. Seeing that flag somehow erased much of the pain and torment of my grandfather's years of imprisonment; it seemed to give him hope.

Now, with the revolution failing, everyone expected that the Communist boot was going to come down harder than ever. But before we had more opportunities to experience it, an odd accident set us on the path to a very different future. On one of his trips out to secure some bread, a hand grenade landed next to my father but, miraculously, did not go off. That was the last straw. He came home and announced to my mother that he was going to leave the country whether she would come or not. Mom said, "O.K., William. We will come if Peter agrees. Ask Peter."

"But where are we going?" I asked.

"We are going to America," he said.

"Why America?" I prodded.

"Because, son. We were born Americans, but in the wrong place."

He said that as naturally as if I had asked him what was the color of the sky. It was so obvious to him why we should head for America that he never entertained any other option. Of course, he hadn't studied American history or politics, but he had come to know deep in his heart the meaning of tyranny. He hungered for its opposite and knew where to find it. America represented to my father, as Lincoln put it, "the last, best hope of earth." I would like to be able

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to say that this made my father a remarkable man for his time and his circumstances. For, in many ways, he truly was a wonder. But this is not one of those ways. Among the Hungarians I knew—aside from those who were true believers in the Communists—this was the common sense of the subject. It was self-evident to them. I would spend much of the next 20 years acquiring this common sense for myself.

Journey to America

We could not tell anyone—including my grandparents and uncle—that we were leaving. It was safer for them (and for us) that they not know where we were, so they could answer honestly and convincingly when questioned. We therefore had to leave with essentially nothing. My sister Marta and I each had a doll and a small bag of clothes. My parents had one small bag between them. And my father had 17 dollars in his pocket in single dollar bills, which he had been hoarding for years; good as gold, he always said. The trains were packed with many other people similarly outfitted and with the same destination—the Austrian border. The Russians were stopping the trains and looking for people. We all just kept our heads down and said nothing to anyone.

When we left the train, hundreds of others left, too, all taking different paths, doing their best to ignore one another but inevitably merging into larger groups, since they were all heading in the same direction. We had many miles ahead of us, most of them in the dark, some across fields and farm land. We did our best to avoid haystacks (where Russians were thought to lie in ambush), and I remember a particularly difficult thing we had to do—ignore the nearby sound of a crying child. That was a well-known Russian trick. We did, however, come upon a boy whose father had been shot. He was immediately welcomed into our growing and informal group of which, it seemed, my father had become the leader.

We crossed a little bridge in the dark before morning. Someone heard the sound of German on the other side of the bridge. It was the Austrian border post! As we stepped over a line, the Austrians asked us to show our weapons. I remember being utterly surprised to see that every man in our group immediately began to drop pistols, knives, etc. We had just finished an expedition of the brave. It had led us to the town of Nickelsdorf, Austria. There we were housed in a big barn, and slept soundly, on beds of straw (I remember the oddness of going to sleep when it was still daylight). The next morning we were moved to an Army camp near Innsbruck. For nearly a month, we were fed and housed there. Dad went out and got a job. I occupied myself in the normal pursuits of 10-year-old boys.

Occasionally, officials from the various embassies of different countries would come by and attempt to catalogue where the refugees were planning to go and why. They wanted to know if we had any relatives in any other country. We did not. The man from the German embassy encouraged us to settle in Germany. We would be made citizens immediately because Schramm was a German name. My father told him we were not German. He was sure of what he wanted. But we had no relatives in America. The representative from the American embassy asked my father, "Don't you know anyone in America?"

As fate would have it, we did. Back in 1946, in war-ravaged Hungary before I was born, my father (who was not a mechanic or an engineer, but was resourceful in all things) had somehow managed to build a car out of scrap parts. It was nothing more, really, than an engine with four wheels and a flat-bed in the back. Apart from military vehicles, cars on Hungarian streets were an extreme rarity at that time. He combed the countryside in this contraption for junk to sell or trade so that his family could survive.

On one such excursion, he came upon a man standing next to a broken-down Volkswagen. The man turned out to be a decommissioned U.S. officer who had been born in Hungary and was taking time off to tour the country. My father was able to help him get the car going again, and the man offered to pay for the help in precious dollars. Dad was too proud to take the money, but he accepted the man's business card. It read, "Joseph Moser, DDS, Hermosa Beach, California." "If you ever need anything," the man said, "don't hesitate to call." Dad gave the card to my mother for safekeeping.

Now, in Nickelsdorf, Austria, ten years later, my mother remembered that we did know someone in America. She ran back to the bunks and out of her little satchel pulled an old, rumpled business card. "Yes," my father said, "I know this man." He showed the business card to the American. We had had no contact with Dr. Moser in all those intervening years. But he was still where his card said he was, and he was willing (thank God!) to sponsor us.

Within a week of contacting Dr. Moser, we were shipped off to Munich and then took a plane to New York City. We landed just before midnight on Christmas Eve, one day after my tenth birthday. When the plane stopped for refueling in Newfoundland, the crew of the airline (TWA, as I recall) gave Christmas presents to the children on board. My sister got a doll, and I got a toy Army jeep. This was the extent of the presents for that Christmas—except for the freedom we were about to enjoy. On Christmas morning we were taken to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, for processing.

A few weeks later we took a train to Los Angeles where we were met by Dr. Moser and his family. Sponsorship meant that they had to guarantee that we would not become a burden to the American people. He had to house and feed us for awhile. Mom and Dad both got jobs right away, Dad at the local newspaper lifting heavy things, and Mom cleaning houses. Soon we had a little beach shack to live in, and my parents were able to purchase their first restaurant with their savings and a bank-financed loan. The whole family went to work. We had to tear the place apart before we could open it. After it was opened, my sister and I washed dishes as Mom and Dad cooked and waited on tables.

The Education of an American

When I reached high school age we moved to Studio City and bought a bigger restaurant, Schramm's Hungarian Restaurant, right across the street from many of the movie studios. I attended Hollywood High because it had an ROTC program, which the neighborhood high

The Night That Ignited the Holocaust

"Factual, well-documented, and brilliant, Martin Gilbert's book on Crystal Night is a poignant lesson."
—Elie Wiesel, author of *Night*

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school didn't. But I must say that I didn't learn much, either in high school or college, about the great country to which I'd emigrated. Even in the early '60s (before "political correctness" had been heard of), it was already common for teachers and professors to teach that America was an amazingly hypocritical place. All I needed to know about Abraham Lincoln, one teacher said, was that he was a racist.

When I graduated from Hollywood High in 1964, I enrolled at San Fernando Valley State College (now California State University, Northridge), while continuing to work for my parents. By that time, I had become an avid reader and had accumulated a large and growing library of my own (to the chagrin of my father, to whom this seemed very impractical). But there was no particular focus to my reading—I wandered through history, philosophy, literature, language, as one thing or another struck my fancy. When I started college, I just took classes that I found interesting. I had no plan or major in mind, until I discovered I had to pick one. So I picked political science.

Throughout these years, because of my own experience rather than anything I was taught in school, I maintained an interest in American politics. The anti-Communist positions of the GOP were a natural draw for my family and me. We didn't think the Democrats fully appreciated the enemy. I became active in Republican Party politics and campaigned for Barry Goldwater in 1964 and for Ronald Reagan in his successful race two years later to become Governor of California. But my politics were not well developed.

While I was active in the Young Republicans, I attended a few seminars sponsored by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. They provided an opportunity for students from colleges all around the country to meet and study with some of the leading conservative professors. It was in 1965 at one of these summer seminars that I first met Harry V. Jaffa. He had just moved from Ohio to Claremont Men's College and was teaching a class on Shakespeare; Martin Diamond was teaching one on *The Federalist*. At about the same time, I came across the new journal *Intercollegiate Review* and the youthful *National Review*.

As I met and became friends with other students and teachers in Claremont, I discovered a world of study that united all my interests and included an understanding of America that was worthy of the subject. I enrolled in a doctoral program in Government at Claremont Graduate School in 1971. I took classes on Plato's *Phaedo*, the American Founding, Lincoln, Shakespeare's politics, and many other topics. It was intoxicating, made even more pleasant because it took place with friends, who were not only smart and hardworking, but partisans of America and the things for which the country stood. It was here that I started understanding what my father had always understood: that in America human beings could prove to the world that they have the capacity to govern themselves. I came to understand what Lincoln meant when he said that the ideas of the Declaration of Independence were the "electric cord" that linked all Americans together, as though we were "blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh, of the men who wrote that Declaration." This is what it meant to be an American, and it wasn't all that far from what it meant to be a man.

Teaching Americans

America became home to me, and these days I continue my life as a student of America. The difference is that now a university pays me to study, rather than my paying it for the privilege. Here at a liberal arts college in central Ohio, I'm in the ironic position of teaching native Americans (I mean native-born Americans) how to think about their country. How odd it seems, and yet how perfectly American, that I, a Hungarian immigrant, should teach *them*.

When I teach them about American politics and American history, I start with a simple thing about their country and themselves. I tell them that they are the fortunate of the earth, among the blessed of all times and places. I tell them this as a thing that should be as obvious to them as it was to my father. And their blessing, their great good fortune, lies in the nation into which they were born. I tell them that their country, the United States of America, is not only the most powerful and the most prosperous country on earth, but the most free and the most just. Then I do my best to tell them how and why this is so. And I teach them about the principles from which those blessings of liberty flow. I invite them to consider whether they can have any greater honor than to pass undiminished to their children and grandchildren this great inheritance of freedom.

Peter W. Schramm is Executive Director of the Ashbrook Center and Professor of Political Science at Ashland University. This essay is adapted from a longer memoir in On Principle, *Special Edition, April 2006.*

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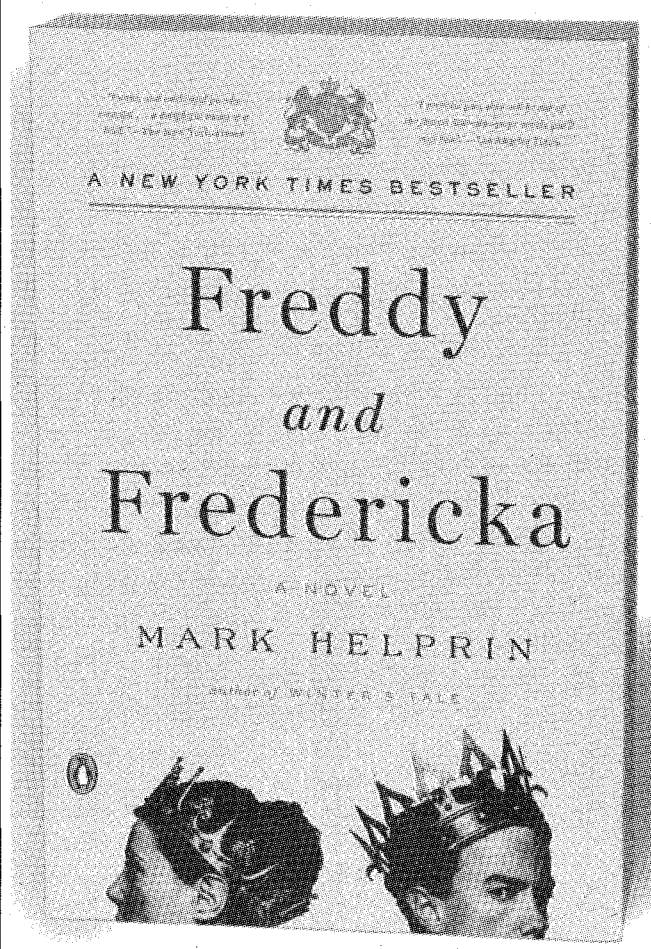

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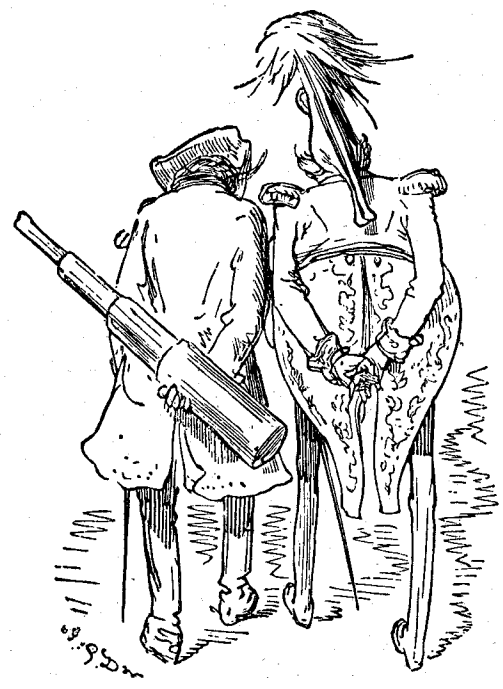
Book Review by William F. Buckley, Jr.

Amicus Brief

Friendship: An Exposé, by Joseph Epstein.
Houghton Mifflin, 288 pages, $24



Joseph Epstein remarks that there aren't many books written on the subject of friendship. Two hundred and seventy pages later, we might be tempted to think, *Score one more for the marketplace!* But of course you wouldn't be tempted to say any such thing after completing this book. Joe Epstein appears to have promised himself, 17 books back, that he would never be tedious, and this latest book is certainly a validation of that oath. In particular because a book on a subject so amorphous (How about a book on love? Or duty?) runs singular risks, in this case the epiphany is that there is no epiphany in the offing. Although Epstein never ceases to amuse and to illuminate, he has no thesis about friendship to communicate, no bizarre discoveries to share. He can only instruct and entertain. Instruct in what? *How to make friends?* No, not really. *How to keep them?* No, not exactly. *How to weather the loss of one?* Not quite, though he has a bromide or two handy. *How much to care for the evanescence of one or more friendships?*

Depends. So what is it that he tells us that is edifying? Well, how to write about friendship, never mind that the challenge—how to make a friend—can't be confidently undertaken because there are no sure-fire rules. On this point he quietly surrenders.

What then *does* he do?

He is gifted beyond belief in coming up with a phrase or a sentence or a paragraph written by or about people who make good copy, Christmas light after light on a huge tree, and after a few chapters you permit yourself to wonder, Can this man keep this up?

Here is a schematic idea of the scope of the challenge he accepts.

Turning to the index, you run your eyes down the first page pausing only at proper names. We have Achilles, Mortimer Adler, Celeste Alberet, Alcibiades, Alexander the Great, Kingsley Amis, Digby Anderson, Yasir Arafat, Hannah Arendt, Aristotle (12 citations), Newton Arvin, Titus Pomponius Atticus, W. H. Auden, Saint Augustine, Jane Austen, Francis Bacon, George Balanchine, Honoré de Balzac, Karl Barth, Jacques Barzun, Walter Jackson Bate, Samuel Beckett, Max Beerbohm.

I was once tempted (unhappily, I resisted the temptation) to turn to a boring television host, who couldn't find stay-awake words to describe the book I was on his program to promote, and throw out a challenge. I thought to say, "Max, give me a number between 1 and 341, the last page of my book. Never mind *why*, I'll *tell* you why. I will turn to the page you select and in five seconds, will read aloud from one paragraph on that page. It will demonstrate the unspeakable satisfaction imparted from hearing the text." As a gesture of humility, I might have added that if any of Max's viewers accepted the challenge and did not find in the selected paragraph the advertised qualities of wit and elegance, that person would be excused from buying the book. Max had about five million viewers, so my challenge was pretty safe.

If readers of these words I am writing about Epstein were within earshot, I'd have rejoiced in issuing a challenge at the same level, centered on people he quoted or alluded to.

For instance, what did Mortimer Adler do or say to get him into *Friendship: An Exposé?*

Page 159: "I once worked for Mortimer J. Adler, who was born a Jew but for many years attended an Episcopal church, and who once instructed a friend of mine who was his office manager not to hire a Jewish girl as his secretary (Adler converted to Catholicism shortly before he died). Around me this man, who identified himself as little as possible as Jewish, would occasionally bring out a Yiddishism or recount stories of his immigrant father. Something about me, apparently, brings out the Jew in people."

Titus Pomponius Atticus had one very close friend. Epstein dilates: "With a wife or husband who is truly one's [friend], with

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physical love and a mutual interest in one's children added, one requires less in and from other friends. Sometimes, in fact, when one has such a dominant best friend—a live-in, as it were, best friend—the expectations and obligations of other friendships can come to seem a touch, and sometimes more than a touch, burdensome."

In my own experience, incipient friendships are often stillborn in that they were never really born. On reflection, they were intimacies that owed their lives to briefly shared experiences.

These are frequently associated with travel. If it wasn't Somerset Maugham who wrote about the shipboard romance, it's simply because he forgot to do so. The situation is very nearly generic. The woman, preferably middle-aged, is on a liner crossing an ocean and in a matter of days goes from attraction for a single male passenger to devotion to him, and before the ship docks there is a mutual intimacy that sweeps them off their feet. When they leave the ship, they go off to disparate engagements, but it is inconceivable that they should end other than as full-fledged lifelong friends; but in fact they never see each other again, or if they do, only fleetingly.

Such relationships are not always romantic in nature. I've had short-term friendships, conceived aboard ship, or during basic training in the army, or pooling time and resources at college in pursuit of learning or pleasure. But the inseminating agent never did permanent work, and commonplace absorptions took over.

I think of Hughie, though I now need to work at it to remember him at all, but he fits here exactly. It was a hot August 1944, and Hughie was on the bus that carried a load of draftees from Camden, South Carolina, to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. There we would be "processed," a three-day operation, after which half of us would be bused to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, the next step in a progressive deployment that took me, finally, to Camp Wheeler, in Macon, Georgia, for basic training in the infantry. Hughie and I were together for ten days, at the end of which he was dispatched to Oklahoma for artillery training. We learned at the same drill that we would be separated that same day, and the forlornness was piercing. We spoke of reunion in Camden after the war ended, and of correspondence in between, though I remember wondering whether Hughie knew how to read and write.

Such "friendships," though perhaps that is not what they should be labeled, I simply imagine happen to us all, no doubt including Mr. Epstein, though I'd be reluctant to admit just any old anybody into the hallowed company of Hughie, sacred in my thoughts, for a couple of weeks in the hot Carolina sun of 1944 when what seemed the entire world was bent on wresting us from civil life to make us into soldiers.

Character is required, along with the suppression of envy, for the less fortunate of two friends not to hold his old friend's success against him. "Francis Bacon, on this point, claims that 'there is little friendship in the world, and least of all that between equals.' I take Bacon's point to be that equality between people is chiefly a spur to rivalry, which can be death on friendship." Balzac is waiting there to strengthen the argument, writes Epstein: "with that worldly cynicism one comes to expect (and enjoy) in him, [he] backs up Bacon by remarking that 'nothing so fortifies a friendship as the belief on the part of one friend that he is superior to the other.'"

The mention of Amis brings on an extensive excerpt from this examination of friendship:

> Consider a relatively famous recent three-way male friendship, that among literary Englishmen of the same generation: the poet Philip Larkin, the novelist Kingsley Amis, and the historian of Soviet terror Robert Conquest.... Larkin was the best poet of his time, Amis the most highly regarded English novelist, and Conquest, in *The Great Terror*, the author of one of the most historically significant books of the past century. Larkin and Amis went to university together; Conquest matched both in comic point of view.

The objective comes now clearly into view:

> Friendships similar to that among these three men are unthinkable among women, and perhaps among American men. Although they were (Conquest is still very much alive) men of considerable intellectual and artistic seriousness, among themselves they remained schoolboys, perhaps no older than age-fifteen schoolboys. They shared an interest in light pornography, spanking and all that (ah, there'll always be an England), as well as a scruffiness and a deliberate loutishness. Larkin could write to Amis about what a waste of time and money it was to court a woman, when it made much more sense and saved five pounds to toss off early in the evening and spend the rest of the night alone, drinking and listening to jazz records. Amis could report to Larkin on his adulteries and his drunkenness. Their anti-female sentiments were unabashed and, if one is not a woman, wickedly funny. Conquest sent them both limericks quite gigglesome in their obscenity. To one another they could mock the pretensions of the famous among their other friends and acquaintances. In short, guy stuff, to a high and amusing if not entirely admirable power, yet of a kind that gave all three of these extraordinary men much pleasure and probably solace.

However abundant the spirit for friendship, there needs to be a practical limitation, surely, in numbers? "I am myself guilty of breaking a serious rule of the art of friendship," writes Epstein,

> the Aristotelian stricture against *polyphilia*, or having too many friends: "for it would seem," Aristotle wrote, "actually impossible to be a great friend to many people." In a talk I once gave on friendship, I mentioned that I have seventy-five or so friends. A sensible woman in the audience said that that seemed an unusually, almost unbelievably high number. (I'm reminded here of reading somewhere that William F. Buckley, Jr., once gave a party to which he invited his fifteen hundred closest friends.)* I now think that the number seventy-five was probably on the modest side, at least if one thinks of friends as people with whom one has had past and expects to have continuing relations, with all the conviviality and obligations entailed in a friendship.

All of which is best summarized by suggesting that here is the perfect gift for your—friend.

Best friend?

Why not? Though perhaps best friends should have two copies.

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* The story here is funny. A commercial ship owner brought to New York City for its maiden exposure a huge new sail-rigged ship and asked me, through an agent of his line, if I would like to have it for a lunch sail with "your closest friends." How many would the ship accommodate, I asked? "Fifteen hundred" was his answer. I took some delight in issuing the invitations, disclosing a mock rank of each invitee in a discreet pencil stroke, counting down from 1,500; a fun exercise in eyebrow-raising. About 50 friends boarded the boat, discussing, for a while, their relative standing in my roster.

William F. Buckley, Jr., is the founder of National Review.

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Book Review by Mark Blitz

Giving Honor Its Due

Honor: A History, by James Bowman.
Encounter Books, 265 pages, $25.95

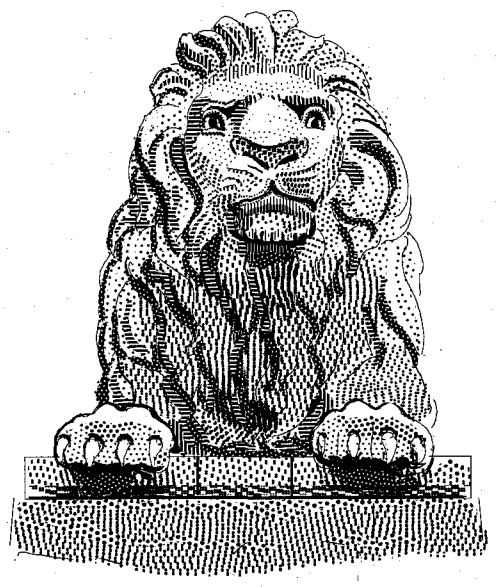
James Bowman's Honor is both an analysis and a warning. It looks carefully at a phenomenon we too often ignore and defends vigorously a quality we sometimes foolishly mock. The book contains no cant, partisan frothing, or ideological silliness, although its recommendations and its enemies will satisfy conservatives more than liberals. It is a substantial achievement.

Bowman, a resident scholar at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, traces honor from the ancient Greeks until today, concentrating on the period from 1914 through Vietnam. The volume's high points are a trenchant review of our post-Vietnam softness and a series of bracing recommendations for restoring honor's importance. Its chief deficiency is conceptual. Bowman sees honor's facets as few do today, but he does not see enough of its setting or unifying core.

At the heart of his analysis is the distinction that he draws between reflexive honor and cultural honor. Reflexive honor means standing up for yourself or getting back at those who harm you, letting "others know one is not to be trifled with." All men have or can have it. Cultural honor is admiring or defending one's culture. The "honor culture" of our radical Islamist enemies obviously differs from Victorian culture, but all cultures honor visible qualities that belong especially to those on top. Traditionally, men are honored by a reputation for courage and women by a reputation for chastity.

Honor's chief contemporary enemies, according to Bowman, are therapy, pacifism, feminism, individual authenticity, excessive equality, and the cult of celebrity. They replace the shame, warrior spirit, chaste domesticity, public outlook, necessary inequalities, and admiration for true distinction that help contribute to honor. To resuscitate it, consequently, we must restore warrior spirit, defend sensible inequalities, overcome celebrity-worship, and revivify differences between the sexes. He believes these outcomes to be possible (in descending order of likelihood) but honestly reports his inability in several cases to see practical steps to bring them about.

Bowman's thoughtful, instructive history is inevitably somewhat uneven. In general, he is weakest about the Greeks and gathers strength as he goes along. He misses Plato's subtle discussions of the political need for both courage and moderation; somewhat distorts the place of Aristotle's view of honor in his overall understanding of virtue; bypasses the connection of virtue's nobility to both the individual soul and the political community; and ignores the importance of reason in forming and directing passions. A more careful consideration of the ancient philosophers might have ameliorated in advance some of the difficulties I discuss below.



Bowman ably brings out the connection of honor to reputation through the stories of Lancelot, Arthur, and Roland, explores Shakespeare's complex understanding, recognizes the modern attack on honor in writers such as Mandeville, and usefully analyzes the Victorians' contradictory yet stalwart notion of the Christian gentleman. He then traces the attack on honor caused by claims about the pointlessness of the First World War and the foolishness of the old men who led it. This attack formed the view of the 1930s, and presaged the objections to the official culture of honor during the Korean and, especially, the Vietnam War. Vietnam and its aftermath exacerbated the honor-opposing culture that is so prominent today.

Much of this discussion is cogent and illuminating, melding intelligent argument and analysis with discussions of literature and film. Every reader will of course quibble with points of emphasis and interpretation. More significantly, however, Bowman touches too lightly and idiosyncratically on our entrance into and success in the Second World War, overemphasizes what he believes was the reflexive assertion of our honor in striking back at those who had attacked us and, consequently, downplays the importance of protecting freedom and justice, of self-defense, and of aiding friends in trouble. He underplays, too, our response to the Cold War, which showed an admirable patience and endurance that is hard to imagine absent the American people's respect for the justice of our way of life. Offended pride or honor would not have been enough.

Bowman's distinction between reflexive and cultural honor is confined to two of honor's three main divisions. By examining all of them we can confront his understanding more radically. One division involves "honors," i.e., marks of distinction. We award honors in professions, the arts, education, and the military. Aristotle considered the chief honors to be political offices. The second involves honorable behavior—doing the right thing; and the third is "honor" as the subject of offense. Offended "honor" is offended pride, "honorable" behavior is proper behavior, and merited "honors" are badges of distinctive excellence.

Offended honor stems from the spiritedness that protects, distinguishes, and encloses us individually, that wards off and punishes intrusions and attacks, and that constitutes each human being insofar as he stands up for himself. Bowman's notion of reflexive honor cogently brings out some of this phenomenon, but he sees it too narrowly. He shows how therapy and authenticity vitiate honor, because the honorable soul is more responsible than the therapeutic self, and honor's content more public than authenticity's self-proclaimed uniqueness. But what about pride requires the self-motivation of responsibility rather than the passivity of therapy, and the acclaim of reputation rather than the daydream of sincerity? Bowman does not elaborate a view of the soul that clarifies the better and worse expressions of our common human powers. His preference for honor could thus seem to be

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merely one irrational stance among others.

Behaving honorably also means doing the right thing. Honorable action need not always mean taking offense or getting even: one does not cheat even if no one is looking. Nor does one push women and children away from the lifeboat, or recklessly kill defenseless civilians. Here, however, Mr. Bowman is too impressed by the way the right thing varies in different places and times. He reminds us that, because only the public knowledge of Lancelot's adultery with Guinevere disgraced Arthur, lying about it was acceptable. Drawing on this example and others, Bowman tries to defend the wisdom of separating public action and private virtue in our day, too. Indeed, he seeks generally to separate honor from virtue and prefers that war not be justified in universal terms.

The result of his argument, however, is that the link between honorably standing up for oneself and doing the right thing becomes fuzzy. It is a mistake not to see how honor's power, pride, and courage are linked to moderate, generous, and just action, prudently understood. Doing the wrong things should cause self-contempt even when no one else knows. Bowman believes that Islamic "honor" killings of rape victims, male tyranny, and murderous revenge show us something about the inequalities and offended bravado always involved in honor. He also knows that these practices are barbaric. To deal successfully with this contradiction (and to justify the reconstituted Victorian honor he prefers), he would need to locate honor in a universal characteristic—spiritedness—that we can perfect through a virtue (courage) connected to other virtues. This would give us grounds to understand the truly honorable and to take offense properly, while still learning something from offended spirit whenever we see it.

BOWMAN'S NOTION OF CULTURAL HONOR raises similar questions. How much is reflexive honor naturally independent of one's culture, and how much is it merely a product of that culture? To what extent do I conceive myself as a "one" only in terms of a "cultural" many? When Bowman discusses authenticity, sincerity, therapy, and the Islamic honor culture it is as if individual human beings could be fully subsumed or defined by the regnant culture. This cannot be, however, if men such as Bowman self-consciously defend a view older and nobler than what prevails in their own culture. The scope he attributes to a culture or "honor group," moreover, remains undefined. Tribes, professions, communities, religions, and arts are not the same. Recognizing their conflicts allows us to overcome some of the hypocrisy of "cultural" honor, while also defending it properly.

We also notice these issues politically. Reflexive honor often concerns striking back at injustice. Although the injustice might be directed against me, I and others understand its substance—the violated equality, hierarchy, or ownership—on the basis of common, or potentially common, principles. We defend our customs and traditions but also our freedom, equality, and goods. The true subject of "cultural" honor is justice as we find it embodied in law, or a way of life. Some ways of distributing goods are arguably more just and better than others. "Honors" speak to true distinctions, not only cultural ones. Mere cultures and traditions are incommensurable and, therefore, objects either of lazy equality, or domination, until we judge them rationally and universally. "Cultural" honor is better or worse in terms of the justice of the way of life it defends. Bowman does not show, as he could have, how any "cultural" honor opens to and is dissatisfied with what is not fully honorable. The inevitable shortcomings of one's community also help to energize the natural split between individual (reflexive) and political (cultural) honor.

These questions are connected to several practical concerns.

For one, Bowman too drastically separates honor from political rule. He is properly wary of our academics' proclivity to reduce honor to a fig leaf for power and patriarchy. He also means to counter the extreme view of war, especially of the First World War, as a corrupt venture precipitated by powerful old men's belief in, or blather about, honor. After all, one cannot see honor clearly without recognizing it as an independent force. Nonetheless, we misunderstand honor unless we notice that encouraging others to live up to codes that I control cements my rule. Bowman mentions this occasionally but not thematically. It is important to acknowledge honor's consequent potential for hypocrisy, however, as well as its place in establishing often unfair authority. Otherwise, as I have suggested, one may ignore the difference between good and bad authority that the hypocrisy in all authority helps make evident. Honor does not justify Islamic tyranny, but it is unreasonable there and elsewhere to ignore the pretense, posturing, and dominance that clothe themselves in honor's dignity.

We also misunderstand honor practically unless we see that bristling at slights is not just the expression of an independent passion; it protects my life and property by leading enemies to look for easier marks. Spiritedness is not only a fact and honor (as courage) a perfection of it; they are linked to security and survival. Recognizing this link to what is ordinary helps to prevent the extremism or even madness of so-called "honor" when it is unhinged from rational balance. In this regard, Bowman also does not say enough about security and self-defense as grounds for war. Not merely a cause and a slap in the face, but securing freedom and resources lead us to protect ourselves. The bristling of spirit can be connected to the calm of satisfaction; alone and apart they tend to become imprudent and ignoble.

FINALLY, ALTHOUGH BOWMAN SKILLfully brings out many factors that work against honor in America today, he does not bring out so well the elements compatible with it. His history mostly skips over the Reagan era. He gives short shrift to our military response in Afghanistan and our police and fire response directly after September 11. He does not ask what citizen involvement might be in future military actions more visibly connected to self-defense than is the Iraq war. Even his analysis of popular culture ignores the television shows of the past decade that present justice being pursued and achieved, not only by loners and outsiders but by dedicated officials.

More generally, he overlooks some of American liberal democracy's resources for defending and elevating our version of reflexive honor, not to mention our principles. He says little about America's grounding in equal freedom and rights. This ground, however, liberates the spirited defense and execution of individual authority and choice. It promotes the character we require to exercise our rights. Our responsibility and industry, in the proper atmosphere of education and competition, support and develop liberal or egalitarian pride. This pride is compatible with courageously taking on public tasks, at least when we understand our freedom and talents expansively.

That we too often understand freedom as private license and too little feel the honorable need to defend our country, however, also is true. Our ethical and intellectual resources are in danger of being depleted. Mr. Bowman's admirable and intelligent book stands manfully against this decline.

Mark Blitz is Fletcher Jones Professor of Political Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College and the author most recently of Duty Bound: Responsibility and American Public Life *(Rowman & Littlefield).*

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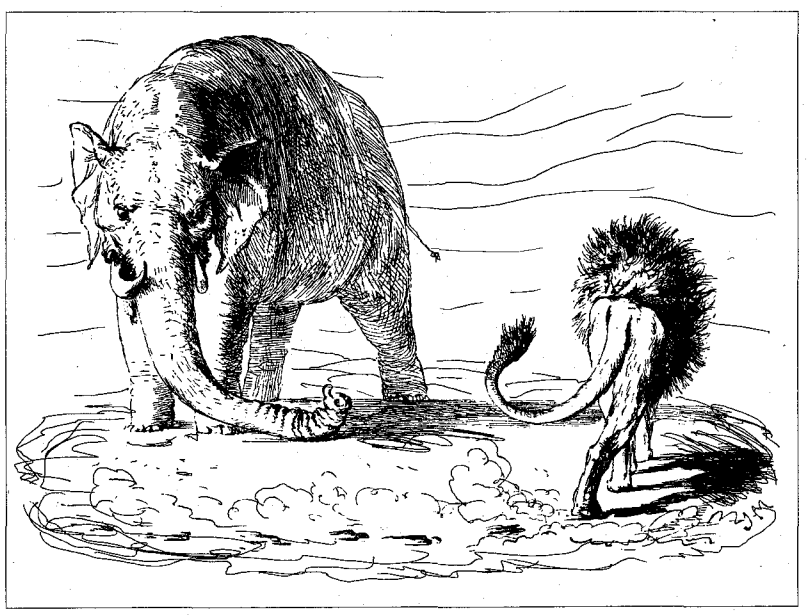
Book Review by John Yoo

The Pettifoggery of War

Preemption: A Knife that Cuts Both Ways, by Alan M. Dershowitz.
W.W. Norton & Co., 192 pages, $24.95 (cloth) $16.95 (paper)



In the last decade, the United States has launched three military interventions (in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq), and the decade to come may bring even more such actions. As of this writing, Iran continues its clandestine efforts to build a nuclear weapon, and North Korea has tested (with limited success) a long-range missile. Should the U.S. attack Iran or North Korea preemptively? If so, when and how? These are probably the most difficult questions an American president in the next decade will have to face. And so there is cause to welcome Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz's well-timed *Preemption: A Knife that Cuts Both Ways*.

Dershowitz, whose eminence in the law is nearly as great as his celebrity, has never been able to resist throwing himself into the issues of the day. He has written books on Israel, *Bush v. Gore*, the Bible, abortion, and the O.J. Simpson and Claus von Bulow cases. But scholars who wander outside their specialty do so at their own risk, and *Preemption* is a case in point.

The book is noteworthy for taking a series of positions: Dershowitz believes Israel was within its rights to launch a preemptive attack in the Six-Day War, to attack Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981, and to selectively target (or assassinate) terrorists. He opposed the war in Iraq (though he says it was "a 51-49 percent matter, with the deciding 2 percent based on the law of unintended consequences"). And in the case of Iran's nuclear program, he appears to believe that the United States and Israel have the moral and legal right "to protect their civilians and soldiers from a threatened nuclear holocaust, and that right must include—if that is the only realistic option—preemptive military action." But he expresses doubts about an attack that would cause "undue civilian casualties and other costs."

Dershowitz is entitled to his opinions, but whether they are persuasive is another matter. Unfortunately, *Preemption* provides no theory or framework for thinking about the issue of preemption. Dershowitz appears to be oddly rudderless. He correctly observes, as foreign policy and international relations specialists have for a long time, that there is a difference between preemption (using force in anticipation of an imminent enemy attack) and prevention (attacking before an enemy poses a threat). He complains that there is no coherent jurisprudence on the use of preemptive or preventive force, and certainly none that nations appear to follow. He is right on that score, too.

Dershowitz offers a long list of factors that he believes should be considered in deciding whether to carry out a preemptive attack, including the type of military action, reasonable alternatives, effect on civilians, reliability of intelligence, and the certainty, severity, and immediacy of the enemy's potential attack. But he provides no method for balancing any of these elements against each other. He likes the philosopher Kant (who would have opposed preemption), but he also likes Bentham (who would have supported preemption). "In eclectic, heterogenous democracies," Dershowitz writes, "no jurisprudence will ever reflect a single ideology or worldview. Nor should it. It should incorporate Benthamite utilitarian principles that weigh costs against benefits, but it should also reflect some Kantian imperatives and absolutes."

But how are we to strike this magical balance between Bentham and Kant? And how are we to evaluate the multiplicity of factors and issues involved in preemptive war? Dershowitz does not say. By the book's end, he seems to have thrown up his hands: he calls for a jurisprudence of prevention and preemption, recommends making adjustments based on future experience, and then withdraws.

Some readers might find this pragmatic approach appealing because of its resemblance to the workings of the common law, which Dershowitz at times invokes as a source of inspiration and comparison. But the common law is not the only or even the most obvious way to approach the problem. He ignores, for example, the long tradition of just-war theory developed by Catholic thinkers and natural law philosophers. Nor does he engage modern academics such as Michael Walzer and

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John Rawls, each of whom wrote significant works on just-war theory. Dershowitz also neglects much that would have been relevant to his subject in the political thought of America's founders. In *The Federalist*, for example, Alexander Hamilton observed that declarations of war had fallen into disuse because nations were then (1787) in the habit of launching unannounced attacks. He argued that the United States needed a strong presidency within a revitalized national government to protect itself against surprise attacks.

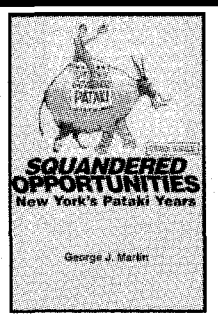
DERSHOWITZ ESCHEWS AMERICAN HISTORY, too. The United States, after all, has conducted several major wars that were arguably preemptive or preventive, including the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I. In the first case, the U.S. reacted to a skirmish along the Texas border by invading Mexico and capturing its capital. America acted less in self-defense than preemptively to prevent Mexico or any other country from wielding power in the western half of the continent. Similarly, America responded to the destruction of the U.S.S. *Maine* by sinking Spain's navy and seizing its overseas colonies. And though President Wilson could have sat out World War I, instead he launched a preventive war, as it were, against the rising power of Germany.

In the end, Dershowitz begs the basic question. He never explains why a "jurisprudence" of preemptive force is needed, or even whether one is possible. Decisions to use force depend upon the totality of the circumstances. No political entity exists to enforce international law, and nations regularly violate the U.N. Charter's stipulations on the use of force. *Preemption* reflects a lawyerly overconfidence in the power of the law, a view unfortunately shared by the U.S. Supreme Court. It never occurs to Dershowitz to ask why, if the law really could work in this area, the legal rules already in place have failed so spectacularly.

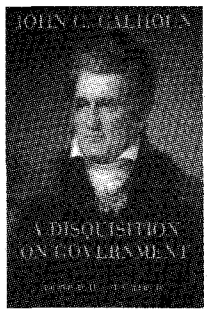
He might have sought in *Preemption* to rethink how best to use military force in an age of terrorism. He might have drawn on our own history as well as the founders' statesmanship while also engaging the serious philosophic and legal arguments that have been offered both for and against preemptive and preventive war. What he has given us instead is a series of talking points on hot-button issues. Somehow one expects more, even from Alan Dershowitz.

John Yoo is professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley, and a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His latest book is War by Other Means: An Insider's Account of the War on Terror *(Atlantic Monthly Press).*

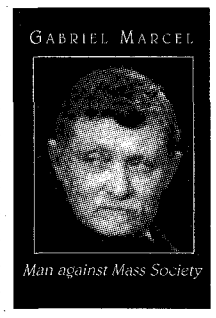
This Fall & Winter at
St. Augustine's Press



In this first commentary on the Pataki administration, George Marlin, former Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and New York Conservative Party activist, traces how fiscally, economically, and culturally Governor Pataki sold out to leftist interests. He contends that the Pataki Administration did not possess a philosophical compass. Political expediency overwhelmed any political philosophy, and "political conscience" and "political ideals" were mere slogans used to patronize conservatives.
1-58731-804-0, 300 pages, cloth, $35.00, October



The most economical and textually accurate version of Calhoun's *Disquisition* available today. As a treatise, the *Disquisition* is one of the greatest and most enduring works of American politial thought, and a text of seminal importance to all students of American politics, history, philosophy, and law. In the *Disquisition*, Calhoun believed he had laid a "solid foundation for political science" through revitalizing popular rule, and attempted to explain the best example of the diffusion of authority and cultivation of liberty: the American Constitution.
1-58731-185-2, 96 pages, paper, $8.00, October



The central theme of this important book is that we are paying the price of an arrogance that refuses to recognize mystery. The author, the foremost modern Christian existentialist, invites the reader to enter into the argument that he holds with himself on a great number of problems.

Written in the early 1950s, Marcel's discussion of these topics are remarkably contemporary. No easy solution is offered, but the Marcel conveys his own faith that ultimately love and intelligence will triumph.
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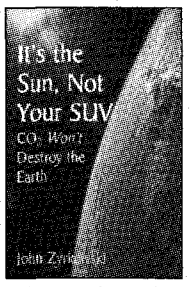

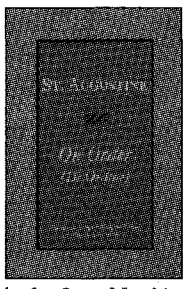

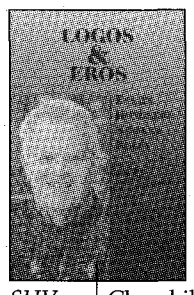

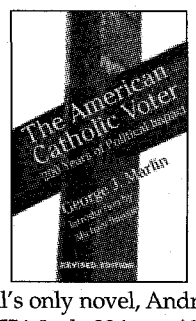

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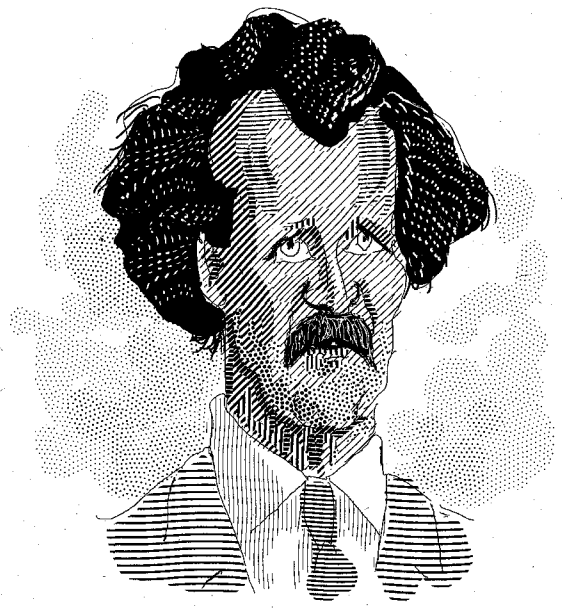
Essay by John Rosenthal

The Road to Condemning Guantanamo

Post-World War II Revisionism and the European Zeal to Shut Down Guantanamo



Manfred Nowak

In the face of what is commonly described in the media as "increasing international pressure," the Bush Administration has recently shown a willingness to consider shutting down the American detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. On closer inspection, this international pressure turns out to come almost exclusively from Europe. Thus in June, in the most highly publicized "international" initiative to date, Austrian Chancellor and then E.U. Council President Wolfgang Schüssel used the occasion of the U.S.-E.U. summit in Vienna to appeal directly to President Bush to close the center. Only a week before, the European Parliament passed a motion likewise calling for the center's closure. These official gestures follow years of harshly negative coverage of Guantanamo in the European media—beginning almost with the first transfer of detainees in January 2002 and reaching a kind of crescendo this spring—that has featured the unquestioning repetition of unverified atrocity stories and blank incomprehension, or outright misrepresentation, of the status attributed to detainees by the U.S. government. The latter gets expressed, above all, in the continual assertion that the U.S. is treating detainees as "enemy combatants"—as if this would constitute a novelty in a situation of war—while omitting the crucial qualifier "unlawful": as in "*unlawful* enemy combatants."

Perhaps no one better exemplifies or has contributed more to this campaign against Guantanamo than the Austrian law professor, and U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak. When, on behalf of the E.U., Schüssel made his now famous appeal to President Bush to close the center, this was widely interpreted as a "spontaneous" reaction to the suicides at Guantanamo that had immediately preceded the summit. In fact, the Austrian Chancellor was following a script that Manfred Nowak had already publicly recommended to the E.U. over a month before.[1] In the preceding months, Professor Nowak turned up regularly in the European media inveighing against the center, which he describes, in language that is neither academic nor diplomatic, as a "a disgrace" (*Schandfleck*).[2]

Interviewed on a German radio station in April, he vowed that "international pressure" would soon bring down Guantanamo. When the interviewer complained that the U.S. was wrongfully treating detainees as "enemy combatants"—a status that she scoldingly observed "in fact does not exist"—Nowak did nothing to correct her, much less to clarify the precedents cited by the American government in classifying some captured combatants as, by the standards of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, "unlawful."[3] Since the U.S.-E.U. summit, Nowak has turned from proselytizing against the Guantanamo facility to laying out the "correct" modalities for closing it down. According to his latest proposal, the vast majority of current detainees (all but "5-10%") should either be repatriated to their countries of origin or—presumably in case they might face "persecution" in the latter—taken in as "refugees" by "European countries or others such as Chile and Argentina."[4] Were this proposal implemented, it would transform captured combatants in what are by all accounts ongoing hostilities into political asylum-seekers—an act of benevolence toward the enemy that is surely unprecedented in the annals of warfare!

But Nowak's greatest contribution to the campaign against Guantanamo is undoubtedly the U.N. Guantanamo report.[5] When it was issued in February, critics pointed to the large number of undemocratic regimes with dubious human rights records on the now defunct U.N. Human Rights Commission, which had sponsored the report. It was, however, Nowak who was responsible for the report's most publicly damaging finding: namely, the conclusion that American treatment of detainees "amounts to torture." As American officials were quick to point out, he refused an American invitation to visit the Guantanamo facility. "What's the sense of going to a detention facility and doing fact-finding when you can't speak to the detainees?" Nowak said in his defense, alluding to a U.S. stipulation. "It is just nonsense!"[6] But as noted in the report itself (§3), the U.S. had not in fact

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denied the U.N. investigators the possibility of speaking with detainees, merely of conducting "*private* interviews or visits" with them. Not surprisingly, in light of the refusal of Nowak and his colleagues to inspect the conditions obtaining at the facility first-hand, their report is based largely on the unverified accounts of freed former detainees and their lawyers.

Careful consideration of the U.N. report reveals, however, that Nowak did not require hard evidence to arrive at his shock conclusion concerning torture at Guantanamo. He does so instead by, in effect, expanding the concept of "torture" beyond recognition. Thus, for example and most notoriously, the report cites methods used to feed inmates on hunger strike as "definitely" constituting torture.[7] The punching or kicking of recalcitrant inmates by guards—"as it inflicts severe pain or suffering on the victims [*sic*]"—was also "considered" by Nowak to "amount to torture" (§54). This is hardly the stuff to send shivers down the spine. Both sorts of cases, moreover, clearly lack the instrumental element—deliberately inflicting pain as a means, for instance, to extract information—that is essential to the concept of torture in the customary sense of the term. Instead, the report stylizes into instances of "torture" the incidental use of force that is part and parcel of every coercive situation.

The consequence of such an inflationary usage is that *actual* instances of torture become more difficult to identify—and hence to prevent. Now, it might seem surprising that a U.N. official whose task it is to monitor the application of the U.N. Convention Against Torture should invite such consequences by playing fast and loose with terminology. But if one considers the identity of the authority whom Nowak has named—and four months *before* the rendering of the report no less!—as the "inspiration" for his Guantanamo judgment, this turns out to be not so surprising after all.

A Teacher's Influence

Last October 18th, Nowak gave a speech in Vienna at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights.[8] The occasion was the awarding of the first ever "Felix Ermacora Human Rights Prize." In 1992, Nowak co-founded the Boltzmann Institute with Ermacora. He earlier studied with him at the law faculty of the University of Vienna, where from 1973 to 1978 he served as Ermacora's teaching and research assistant. In eulogizing his late colleague and former teacher, Nowak recalled how Ermacora had once investigated torture charges against British security forces in Northern Ireland as a member of the European Human Rights Commission. "[A]s is well known," Nowak observed,

> the Commission had qualified the five "deep interrogation techniques" employed by the British security forces as torture. I can still well remember Ermacora's dismay when the [European] Court [of Human Rights], on the urging of the British judge, corrected the opinion of the Commission and found the British forces responsible for "merely" inhumane treatment. More than 30 years later, I am now, in my role as U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture, charged with the qualification of similar interrogation methods employed by the USA in Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and other camps. I think, in this difficult question, I will permit myself to be inspired by the legal opinion of my former teacher rather than by the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.

Note that the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights—set up to monitor the application of a regional convention to which the U.S. is not a party—ought not to have had any particular relevance to Nowak's assessment. But note further that Nowak is here saying that he will *ignore* what he evidently regards as relevant legal precedent, in order to draw inspiration from an "opinion" of Felix Ermacora that the court in question *rejected*.

One month later, in an interview with Scotland's *Sunday Herald*,[9] Nowak entered into a polemic with the U.S. government, insisting that the U.N. Rapporteurs would persevere with their investigations "whether we are allowed in [to Guantanamo] or not." He had received his invitation to visit Guantanamo three weeks before. He went on to claim that the U.S. conduct of its war with Islamist terror organizations was undermining the "framework of international human rights law which has been developed over the last 60 years by the U.N. as a reaction to national socialism." Now, it is hardly plausible to treat the U.N. Convention Against Torture, which was first adopted by the General Assembly in 1984, as a "reaction to national socialism." But in light of Nowak's invocation of National Socialism, it is of even greater interest to know something about the career of his "inspiration," Felix Ermacora, and about the curious company that Ermacora kept.

Old Nazis and New Revisionists

Far from being a defender of the post-WWII European and international orders, Felix Ermacora played a prominent role in revisionist circles in Austria and Germany—"revisionist", among other things, in the sense that they regarded significant aspects of the postwar settlements as unjust to Germany and Germans and that they aimed to overturn them. The connections of these circles to the Third Reich, in both personal-biographical and ideological terms, have been extensively documented in German.[10]

Starting in 1965, Ermacora formed part of a "Working Group" of legal scholars and German state functionaries, whose stated aim was to lay out the principles of a "European law of ethnic groups." The promotion of such a "law of ethnic groups" (*Volksgruppenrecht*) was and remains the purpose of a little known, but influential, German-based non-governmental organization called the Federal Union of European Ethnic Groups (FUEV). The FUEV's leading "theoretician" at the time, Theodor Veiter, was the convener of the "Working Group." Several of the participants in the "Working Group," including Veiter, were former Nazis.[11] The others included, for instance, former SS man Kurt Rabl and Hermann Raschhofer, who was appointed Professor of International Law in German-occupied Prague in 1941. The German political scientist Samuel Salzborn has described Raschhofer as "sort of the right-hand man" of Karl-Hermann Frank, the Reich Secretary for the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia" that the German occupiers established following the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939.[12] Frank would be convicted of war crimes and executed after the war.

Veiter and former party comrades like Rabl and Raschhofer had participated in the elaboration of National Socialist ideas on law and international law in the 1930s and early 1940s. The project of constructing a Europe-wide "law of ethnic groups" was already the centerpiece of their reflections under the Third Reich. In 1938, for instance, Veiter published a monograph on "national autonomy" (*Nationale Autonomie*). In the vocabulary of Veiter and his colleagues, this expression refers to "nations" understood in a pre-political, ethnic sense: thus "the Germans" and "the French," but also, say, "the Corsicans" or "the Basques"—or, for instance, "the Jews." Of the latter, Veiter wrote the following in his 1938 volume: "The destructive questioning of the highest human values… by Jewry shows that Jews are already excluded from the ethnic-national [*völkischen*] life of other nations by virtue of their mode of thought, which flows precisely from their race, and that they should therefore be excluded from the other nations."[13]

Ermacora can hardly be said to have shied away from such associations. In their 1996 exposé of the FUEV, *Von Krieg zu Krieg [From One War to the Next]*, the German journalists Walter von Goldendach, Hans-Rudiger Minow, and Walter Rudig note:

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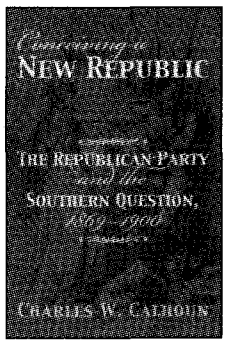

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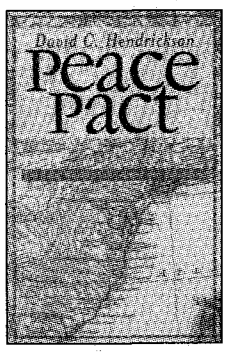

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His [1974] work *Die Selbstbestimmungsidee [The Idea of Self-Determination]* was published in the Austrian "Eckart Series," an organ that aimed to provide "a worthy memorial to the achievements of the Waffen-SS" and to bring about a renaissance of the "biologically effective genetic heritage [*Ahnenerbe*]" of the "ethnic-national [*völkisch*] ancestry."[14]

In 1977, Ermacora was a founding member of a second German NGO that has agitated for "ethnic law" in Europe: the International Institute for the Law of Nationalities and Regionalism (INTEREG). His co-founders in INTEREG included Veiter and the convicted Nazi war criminal Franz Hieronymus Riedl. The later German representative to the E.U. "constitutional convention," the Social Democrat Peter Glotz, was also, incidentally, a founding member of INTEREG.

In 1984, Ermacora published a favorable review of the German edition of David Irving's *Hitler's War* in the Austrian magazine *Neue Ordnung*.[15] Although Irving was not yet an outright Holocaust denier, Ermacora's own admiring account of the volume suggests that minimizing the significance of the Nazi genocide against European Jews—not to mention, exonerating Hitler of responsibility for it—was already a core theme of his writing. "Irving has placed the judgment of the role of the Germans in politics and war—above all, in the Second World War—in a significant new light," Ermacora enthuses in the opening sentence of his review. Nonetheless, he allows that: "The book will give offense, because the author treats the liquidation of the Jews as an accident that occurred in haste and tries to free our image of Adolf Hitler from the clichés that have attached to it in the course of the last 60 years."

The revisionist tendencies of Ermacora's own work are on display in a so-called *Handbook on the German Nation* that was published in 1986. His contribution, bearing the alarmist title "An Endangered Nationality" *(Bedrohtes Volkstum)*, consists of a survey of the situation of "ethnic Germans" in Eastern Europe and South Tirol. In it, he writes:

> After the Munich Accord of 1938 and the subjugation of Czechoslovakia as a protectorate of the German Reich, the Germans could say that the self-determination of peoples had been applied.... It was first at the end of the Second World War that a demographic transformation of the territories occurred, not as a result of a constructive policy of the German Reich, but rather of the policy of the victorious powers.[16]

The chiding allusion here is to the transfer of the bulk of the "ethnic German" population of Czechoslovakia, the so-called Sudeten-Germans, to Germany. The measure was agreed upon at the Potsdam Conference by the three major Allied powers: the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. In light of the some 200,000 to 300,000 Czechoslovakian Jews, as well as tens of thousands of their non-Jewish compatriots, who died in German camps, Ermacora's seeming insistence that a "demographic transformation" of the Czech territories had not occurred as a result of what he mind-bogglingly calls a "constructive policy of the German Reich" is particularly notable.

Relativizing Nazi Crimes

Nonetheless, as a rule, the revisionism of Ermacora and his colleagues has not involved denying the crimes of Nazi Germany, but rather diminishing their significance by affirming the commission of commensurate crimes by the Allied powers. In this sense, they pioneered the practice of moral equivalence that is the hallmark of so much of the criticism leveled against the U.S. in its current war with Islamist terror groups. Thus, in 1991, in a commissioned "expert opinion" for the Bavarian government, Ermacora concluded that the expulsion of the Sudeten-Germans constituted a "genocide and crime against humanity." Thereby, the unquestionable suffering that Allied policies inflicted on Germans was upgraded to a "crime" on par with those committed *by Germans* against the populations that had been previously subjected to Nazi rule and, in particular, to the "signature" crime of Nazi Germany: the systematic extermination of European Jewry. Thereby too, the concept of genocide gets banalized, making the enormity of Nazi Germany's crimes more difficult to grasp and impossible to name.

Such revisionism has often been accompanied by unmistakable tones of resentment—and sometimes, indeed, outright revanchism—toward the United States and its WWII allies. The authority whom Ermacora cites for his "scientific" account of the Potsdam Agreement and its consequences, the American-born Alfred de Zayas, has, for instance, in a recent interview with the Germany weekly *Junge Freiheit*, denounced Roosevelt and Churchill as "war criminals."[17] In a similar vein, yet another influential German NGO, the Society for Endangered Peoples (GfbV), published a memorandum in 1998 titled "For an Independent International Criminal Court! Remember [the] Crimes of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council!"[18]

The GfbV has made a hyper-inflationary conception of genocide into its calling card.

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GfbV founder Tilman Zülch has declared the 20th century the "Century of Genocides" and in his seemingly endless enumeration of modern genocides the crimes of Nazi Germany—in his words, "the most terrible in *German* history" (my italics)—fade into relative insignificance. In keeping with Felix Ermacora's "expert opinion," Zülch includes the forced transfer of the Sudeten-Germans in his enumeration. Indeed, it turns out on closer inspection that the Allied powers that defeated Nazi Germany are made either directly or indirectly responsible for the bulk of the alleged crimes included in Zülch's account, with the United States, at least as measured in Zülch's expenditure of verbiage, seemingly topping the list.[19] The GfbV suffered some embarrassment in 1995, when it became known that a long-time member of its advisory board, the journalist Peter Grubbe, was in fact Claus Volkmann, the former Nazi administrator of the Jewish ghetto of Kolomea in German-occupied Poland.

The Revisionists and International Law

MANFRED NOWAK UNDOUBTEDLY boasts an impressive record of service to international institutions in the cause of enforcing human rights law. In addition to his appointment as U.N. Rapporteur on Torture, for instance, he has been named by the Council of Europe to serve on the Human Rights Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It should not be imagined, however, that such a record of service is somehow incompatible with having come under the influence of Felix Ermacora and his revisionist colleagues. The success of the revisionist scholars and kindred NGOs in gaining entry into international institutions and influencing the postwar development of international law is a remarkable story, which is, regrettably, little known even to specialists.

Felix Ermacora himself represents a particularly salient case in point. He was not only a member of the European Commission on Human Rights until his death, but also a long time member—and in 1974 the chair—of the equivalent U.N. Commission. De Zayas—author of the curiously titled volume *Nemesis at Potsdam*—was for over two decades a U.N. employee in Geneva, including a stint as secretary of the Human Rights Committee. The GfbV enjoys consultative status with both the Council of Europe and the U.N.

Moreover, the Nazi "legal experts" Veiter, Rabl, and Raschhofer have become standard references in the contemporary academic literature on human rights law: not only in German, but also in English. For instance, Antonio Cassese's 1995 tome, *Self-Determination of Peoples: A Legal Reappraisal* (Cambridge University Press), contains no fewer than 16 references to the members of the trio. Cassese is one of Europe's leading experts on human rights law and has, among other things, served as chief justice of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Needless to say, whether out of ignorance or a sense of discretion, citations of the trio's work are typically limited to their postwar output.[20] It is worth noting in this connection, however, that Felix Ermacora displayed no such compunction. The published version of his "expert opinion" on the Sudeten-German question includes Theodor Veiter's 1938 volume on "national autonomy" in the bibliography of works consulted.[21] This is the same volume in which Veiter calls for the "exclusion" of the Jews from the life of "other nations."

In light of the foregoing, Manfred Nowak's charges of "torture" against the U.S. can be understood as just the latest instance of the debased usage of key categories in international humanitarian law that Ermacora and

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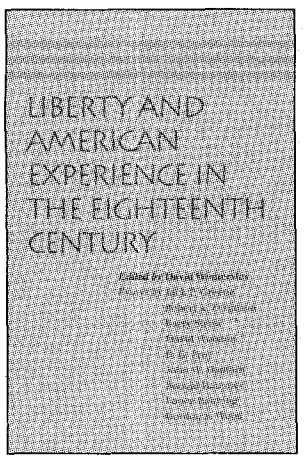

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his revisionist colleagues pioneered. It was perhaps only to be expected that the challenges faced by America in its current war should provide renewed impetus for the old anti-American resentments that have animated this usage. To close Guantanamo in deference to such resentments would not serve the cause of justice. In light of the potential risk to American security, however, it could well end up serving the cause of a furtive and long-awaited revenge.

John Rosenthal has taught political philosophy and the history of European philosophy at, among other institutions, New York University, Rutgers University, and the École Normale Superieure of Lyon. He would like to thank the Documentation Center of the Austrian Resistance (DÖW) for its kind assistance in obtaining archival materials.

ENDNOTES

[1] "Guantanamo: UNO drängt Wien", *Der Standard*, May 5, 2006. ("In the opinion of the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Torture, the Austrian Manfred Nowak, the visit of American President George W. Bush to Vienna in June should also be used to communicate a common E.U. position concerning the detention facility in Guantanamo. I would be glad if the E.U. Council arrived at a common position during the Austrian presidency, according to which it would press the USA to close Guantanamo....'")

[2] "Folter: China ist reformwillig—im Gegensatz zu den USA" ("Torture: China is prepared to reform—in contrast to the USA"), *Die Universität*, April 19, 2006. (Consultable at http://www.dieuniversitaet-online.at/beitraege/news/folter-china-ist-reformwillig-im-gegensatz-zur-usa/65/neste/1.html).

[3] Deutschlandradio Kultur, April 22, 2006 (audio file at http://www.dradio.de/dkultur/sendungen/interview/492461/). The most important domestic precedent for the administration's use of the designation "unlawful combatant" involves the trial by military tribunal of captured German saboteurs during WWII: a practice that was upheld, along with the validity of the designation, in the Supreme Court's 1942 *ex parte Quirin* decision. In light of this background, such unwillingness to recognize the "existence" of the category on a German radio program is particularly noteworthy. More generally, on the history of the designation "unlawful combatant," see Lee A. Casey and David B. Rivkin, "The Laws of War, They aren't POWs", *The Washington Post*, March 3, 2002.

[4] "U.S. urged to close Guantanamo Bay Prison", *The Financial Times*, July 6, 2006. In remarks to Reuters cited in this article, Nowak hints knowingly that such a proposal is in fact under discussion between E.U. and U.S. negotiators.

[5] U.N. Commission on Human Rights, *Situation of Detainees at Guantanamo Bay*, February 15, 2006. (Consultable at http://www/ohcht.org/engligh/bodies/chr/docs/62chr/E.CN.4.2006.120_.pdf).

[6] See, for instance, "U.N.: U.S. tortures Guantanamo detainees," MSNBC, February 13, 2006 (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11333496/page/2/), though Nowak's remarks were widely reported in various media.

[7] The only evidence that Nowak cites in support of this contention is the assertions of detainee lawyer Julia Tarver, who accuses American medical personnel of having force-fed detainees through the nose using tubes "thicker than a finger" that caused them to bleed and gag (*Situation of Detainees at Guantanamo Bay*, note 73). On a recent visit to Guantanamo, a journalist from the German daily *Der Tagesspiegel* interviewed the head physician responsible for feeding hunger-striking inmates. Displaying "thin plastic tubes" used for this purpose, the physician described charges that hunger-striking detainees were "punished, or even tortured" through the use of thick tubes as "defamatory" (*infam*) ("Das Lager," *Der Tagespiegel*, July 23, 2006). By refusing the American government's—in his estimation, "nonsensical"—invitation to visit Guantanamo, Manfred Nowak assured that such charges would be left uncontradicted in the U.N. report.

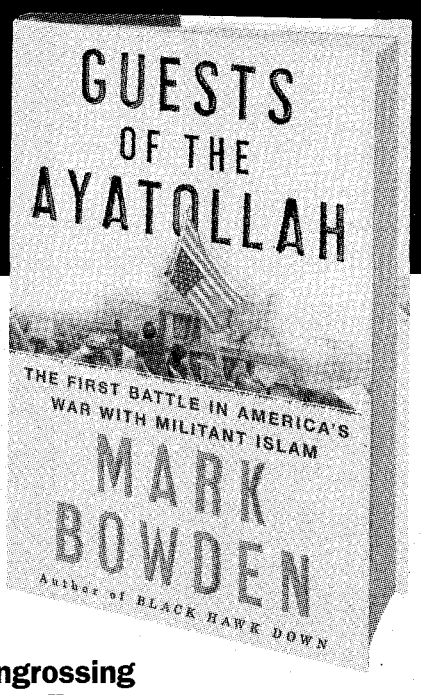
[8] The text of the speech is available on the site of the Boltzmann Institute: http://www.univie.ac.at/bim/php/bim/get.php?id=127.

[9] "Torture by UK and US 'biggest human rights threat since Nazis'", *The Sunday Herald*, November 20, 2005.

[10] See especially W. von Goldendach, H-R. Minow and M. Rudig, *Von Krieg zu Krieg* (Berlin: Verlag 8. Mai, 1996) and the elaborately detailed new academic study by Samuel Salzborn, *Ethnisierung der Politik* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2005).

[11] See Salzborn, p. 204, for the details of Veiter's party membership.

THE FIRST BATTLE IN AMERICA'S WAR WITH MILITANT ISLAM



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[12] "Geplante Aufarbeitung ist nur ein Alibi-Akt," interview with Dr. Samuel Salzborn, ARD Tagesschau, September 1, 2006 (http://www.tagesschau.de/aktuell/meldungen/0,1185,OID5852372_TYP6_THE_NAV_REF1_BAB,00.html).

[13] Cited from Goldendach, et al, p. 38.

[14] Goldendach, et al, p. 48.

[15] *Neue Ordnung*, no. 8-9/1984, p. 22.

[16] Felix Ermacora, "Bedrohtes Volkstum," in Bernard Willms, ed., *Handbuch zur Deutschen Nation*, vol. 2 (Tübingen: Hohenrain Verlag, 1987), p. 509. Other contributors to the *Handbook* include Alain de Benoist, the leading intellectual of France's so-called "New Right," whose Fascist (Julius Evola) and Nazi (Carl Schmitt) influences are well known, and the theologian/ecologist Werner Georg Haverbeck. The entry on Haverbeck in the on-line German-language *Encyclopedia of Right-Wing Extremism* (http://lexikon.idgr.de/h/h_a/haverbeck-werner-georg/haverbeck- werner- georg.php) features an impressive record of service to the Nazi party and state between 1928 and 1945, including membership in both the SA and the SS. On Haverbeck's postwar "scholarly output," it cites the assessment of Thomas Jahn and Peter Wehling in their 1991 book *Ökologie von Rechts* (*Right-Wing Ecology*): "Haverbeck combines a 'Nordic' understanding of Christianity, with barely-hidden anti-Semitic traits, and an ethnically-based nationalism." It should be noted in this connection that Fascist and neo-Nazi currents are conventionally classified in both Germany and France as being of the "(extreme) Right." In light of the pronounced "anti-capitalist" elements in both Fascist and Nazi ideology, this classification is highly problematic.

[17] "Verbrechen gegen die Menschheit," *Junge Freiheit*, October 14, 2005.

[18] For more on the GfbV in this connection, see "A Curious Proponent of the ICC: the 'Society for Endangered Peoples,'" *Transatlantic Intelligencer*, April 15, 2005 (http://www.trans-int.com/news/archives/151-a-curious-proponent-of-the-icc-the-society.html).

[19] See Tilman Zülch, "Völkermord im 20. Jahrhundert," *Pogrom*, no. 200, Fall 1998. Zülch devotes particular attention to former American Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, whom he accuses of complicity in multiple "genocidal crimes."

[20] A contribution from Veiter on "Ethnic Group Rights" is, for instance, included in a 1988 Festschrift for Felix Ermacora (Kehl/Strasbourg/Arlingon: Engel Verlag) that was co-edited by Manfred Nowak.

[21] Felix Ermacora, *Die Sudetendeutschen Frage* (Munich: Langen Müller Verlag, 1992), p. 244.

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Book Review by Steven B. Presser

We, the People

America's Constitution: A Biography, by Akhil Reed Amar.
Random House, 672 pages, $29.95 (cloth), $16.95 (paper)

In a valuable postscript to his new book, Akhil Reed Amar summarizes the ambitious scope of *America's Constitution: A Biography*. He has attempted, he writes,

> to unite law, history, and political science; to view the [Constitution] over its entire life span; to see how various textual provisions and institutional patterns fit together; to ponder both rights and structure, and to examine their interrelation; to analyze both constitutional politics... and constitutional law...; to attend to all the branches of government, and not just the judiciary; to weigh state constitutionalism alongside the federal document; to consider both domestic- and foreign-policy dimensions of America's Constitution; and to show the reader both the core situations in which a given text was meant to apply and salient instances where a text was plainly *not* meant to apply.

Without doubt, this is a bold book. And remarkably, Amar, a Yale Law School faculty member, has actually done what he set out to do. He has succeeded in writing what is quite possibly the best single volume on the Constitution since the student edition of Joseph Story's *Commentaries on the Constitution*, published nearly two centuries ago.

At a time when law books have become very specialized reading, Amar is no less ambitious in choosing his audience. His constitutional "biography" is intended for "undergraduates, law students, graduate students, history buffs, civil libertarians, opinion leaders, politicians, judges, lawyers, teachers, professors, and general-interest readers." Certainly, any of these groups could profit from this wide-ranging volume.

Most books about the Constitution deal with the limited circumstances surrounding its drafting or with the development of different interpretative doctrines, or focus solely on particular branches of government or particular amendments. Amar rightly claims that such a limited focus does not allow us to appreciate the document's real purposes and its true genius. Of course, it is still possible to disagree with aspects of his reading; but Amar even helps his critics by addressing what their quibbles are likely to be. By exploring his own limitations he has graciously and, one is tempted to say, humbly behaved in a manner atypical of law professors in general, and Yale ones in particular.

In his previous book, *The Bill of Rights: Creation and Reconstruction* (1998), he turned the conventional wisdom on its head, arguing that the original ten amendments were meant primarily not to protect minorities but to empower popular majorities. Here, in another interesting maneuver, he finds the original Constitution at the same time more democratic and more devoted to protecting slavery than most scholars had thought. The story he tells in *America's Constitution* concerns the gradual aggrandizement of the document's democratic aspects and the eventual obliteration of its racial animus. This gives the book thematic unity, but at the expense of neglecting some key distinctions. For instance, he treats republicanism and democracy as the same thing. Most of the founders would have disagreed, insisting on crucial distinctions between republican governments that employed representation and prevented (or at least mitigated) majority faction, and democratic governments that did not. While "popular sovereignty" is undeniably at the heart of the Constitution, it is not at all clear that "We the people" favored pure popular rule, as Amar believes. His lavish praise for the Civil War's purportedly democratic outcome, the Progressive Amendments, and the federal government's explosive growth at the expense of the states may not be quite so warranted. Furthermore, he agrees with the way the Supreme Court has incorporated the Bill of Rights to restrict state and local governments. Still, to his credit, he appears to understand the irony of applying the First Amendment's establishment clause against the states, since that clause was actually designed to preserve state establishments of religion.

But if sometimes Amar simply reaffirms the liberal pieties that prevail in the legal academy, at other times he offers some comfort to conservatives. His understanding of the president's "commander in chief" powers, for example, which he uses to justify President Lincoln's controversial wartime measures, could be easily adopted by the Bush Administration to support wiretaps, Guantanamo detentions, and the Patriot Act. Amar also understands, better than most academics, the powerful, beneficial role that constitutional amendments can play in implementing popular sovereignty. Though he hints that there may be some legitimate means of amending the Constitution outside the cumbersome Article V procedures (there are not), he at least appears to believe that it is the American people's continuing responsibility, exercising self-government, to make use of Article V.

Akhil Amar doesn't always succeed in rising above the current prejudices of the chattering classes, but he is still about as fair-minded as American academics get, and his ability to turn an amusing phrase sets him apart. Writing on the differences between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution, he explains that "The new Congress would vote member by member, as individual lawmakers. In sum, the old Congress consisted of states' men; the new congress would consist of statesmen." In the course of elucidating the Second Amendment, he writes that "history confirms a republican reading of the Second Amendment, whose framers generally envisioned Minutemen bearing guns, not Daniel Boone gunning bears." And observing that female suffrage succeeded first in the Western states because men there wanted to attract more women, Amar notes, "By letting women vote with their hands, perhaps Western men hoped that women would vote with their feet—and head West."

America's Constitution: A Biography is thus not only a work of considerable erudition, but of wit. One of our leading constitutional scholars has made a credible and at times delightful bid to remove that document from the exclusive possession of scholars and politicians and give it back to the people themselves. Although not without its blemishes, this is likely to be regarded as one of the most important books on American government in the early 21st century. And what's more, it will deserve the acclaim.

Stephen B. Presser is the Raoul Berger Professor of Legal History at Northwestern University School of Law and the Legal Affairs editor for Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture.

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Book Review by Daniel Walker Howe

In Search of a Public Philosophy

Nature and History in American Political Development: A Debate, by James W. Ceaser, with responses by Jack N. Rakove, Nancy L. Rosenblum, and Rogers M. Smith. Harvard University Press, 240 pages, $25.95

In this book, an expanded version of the first Alexis de Tocqueville Lectures at Harvard University, James Ceaser argues that certain "foundational concepts" have acted as premises for policy in America and continue to form the basis of our political debate. A professor of government at the University of Virginia and the author of several excellent books on American politics and political thought, Ceaser identifies three kinds of foundational concepts in American history, deriving from views of nature, history, and religion. Having only one lecture at his disposal, he chose to address only nature and history. The book also features responses to Ceaser's lecture by three distinguished commentators, and his rejoinder to them.

Professor Ceaser engages in some in-group joking with his audience, much of which was lost on me, outsider that I am to the discipline of political science. From him, I learned that within political science there is a field called "American Political Development" or "APD," and that it resembles (they would prefer to say it uses) what historians like me call "intellectual history." Intellectual history is one of many traditional historical subfields that, alas, have largely been abandoned by history departments and taken up by scholars in other disciplines. Nowadays, political scientists ponder what used to be diplomatic history, and legal scholars study constitutional history. Members of English departments explore cultural history, and scholars in divinity schools and religious studies departments write on the history of religion. Even political history, once the skeleton of historical understanding, suffers a similar exile. Only a few scholars calling themselves historians pursue the subject. Today, one finds most scholars of political history in departments of government or politics. The loss to the historical discipline has meant gain to others. When historians grumble that our subject has shrunk in public perception of its importance and in the attention it gets in schools, we have mainly ourselves to blame.

Professor Ceaser's analysis of American history is highly sophisticated and impressive. He shows how rival conceptions of History distinguished the world views of Jacksonian Democrats from those of their opponents, the often forgotten Whigs. For the sake of clarity, Ceaser distinguishes between "History" with a capital H, a source of normative values for thinkers like Marx or Burke, and thus of foundational concepts, and "history" with a lower-case h, the academic specialty that makes no such claims and that Ceaser hopes to draw upon for evidence. I was waiting for him to make an analogous distinction between "Nature" with a capital N (the source of normative natural law and natural rights), and "nature" with a lower-case n, the subject of present-day value-free natural science, but he did not. Later on, he suggests that foundational concepts drawn from nature are more reasonable than those drawn from History, which left me speculating that he perhaps intended the history/History distinction to be invidious, and did not want to make such a distinction between two ways of viewing nature. Nonetheless, a parallel nature/Nature distinction would have been useful as well as consistent.

The discussants, two political scientists and one historian, give the volume balance both politically and intellectually. All regret his decision to leave religion out, as do I. Religion influenced the Framers of the Constitution less than natural rights or the lessons of history did, but the generation of the founders was unusual in this respect. Some of the space Ceaser devotes, for example, to the antebellum lawyer Rufus Choate might more profitably have been devoted to the remarkable evangelical synthesis of Protestantism and the Enlightenment that has exerted such strong and lasting power in American political life. (Choate's Burkean political thought is indeed fascinating, and I've written on it myself; but faced with hard choices about inclusion, I think religion trumps it.)

Sometimes the American faith in progress which Ceaser attributes to the French *philosophes* and Scottish moral philosophers actually reflected post-millennialism—the belief, going back at least as far as Jonathan Edwards, that human action in history can hasten the messianic age that will in turn herald the Second Coming of Christ. Post-millennialism thus did much to prepare the way for America's sense of international mission and for the Social Gos-

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pel, both of which Ceaser rightly notices, despite his avowed intention to set religion aside.

Regardless of his reasons, downplaying religion prevents Ceaser from doing full justice to his theory of America's foundational concepts. Like other American movements, the antislavery movement drew not only upon the doctrine of equal natural rights but also upon religious faith, usually biblical but in a few influential cases transcendental or utopian. Conversely, the proslavery argument invoked not only History and racial natural history, but also—and even more often—the Old and New Testaments.

Ultimately, paying closer attention to religion would have improved his discussion of statesmanship. Ceaser holds that American statesmen are free to choose among the foundational concepts, wisely or unwisely, that they apply to particular crises. To have included more about religious foundational concepts would have underscored this variety, and helped make Ceaser's point about our politicians' agency and responsibility.

Rather than discuss religion, Ceaser studies natural rights. His account of natural rights as an important, recurring, and vital force in American political discourse is valid, valuable, and politically relevant. Indeed, one could make an even stronger argument for the pervasive influence of natural rights than Ceaser does. The Ninth Amendment would seem to incorporate the foundational concept of natural rights into the foundational document of our positive law.

From a historical perspective, the problem with natural rights is that both sides of America's great controversies have laid claim to them. The Republican Party of Lincoln and the Democratic Party of Jackson each invoked natural rights. Many Americans did not see the difference between Lincoln's admirable demand for the exclusion of slavery from the territories and Chief Justice Roger Taney's *Dred Scott* decision. After all, each spoke of rights. A logician might note that Taney and his supporters contradicted themselves. On the one hand, they denied in effect that blacks were men, and hence denied the very idea of natural rights, which upholds the equality of all men. At the same time, they spoke of the right of all Americans to carry their property anywhere in the Union. What justified that right, fundamentally, if not the very right Taney and friends had just denied? The trouble is, voters and statesmen often care little for logic.

As Ceaser's argument approaches the present, he addresses rival schools of thought among his professional colleagues. These take on the character of both primary and secondary sources in his account. He notes that some present-day political philosophers don't believe that either God or natural rights really exist and don't believe that history has any objective meaning or lessons; they therefore deny that foundational concepts serve a useful purpose. Ceaser judges their position morally bankrupt, nihilistic. Any Christian would concur in his judgment. As a historian, I worry about the effect of moral relativism and what is now called postmodernism on the standards of my profession. Still, it would seem that one of the foundational concepts available for today's statesmen is having no foundational concepts.

Professor Ceaser and his colleagues want to discover knowledge useful to policymakers, among others. Historians usually say they just want to find out what the past was like.

It seems to me that there is something liberating about the study of history for its own sake rather than for some particular instrumental purpose, which will entail an inevitable narrowing of focus. The "liberal arts" got their name because they were considered appropriate for study by free (in Latin, *liber*) persons, those at *liberty* to study without the need for a practical payoff. We historians do assume, however, that knowing about history makes good citizens—an idea that sets the context for, if it does not limit, the goal of studying history for its own sake. Once upon a time there was a maxim that "history is philosophy teaching by example." The authors of *The Federalist*, among many other sober people, believed this. So, I am happy to report, does the author of this engaging, deeply thoughtful, and public-spirited volume.

Daniel Walker Howe is Rhodes Professor of American History Emeritus at Oxford University and Professor of History Emeritus at UCLA. He is the author of The Political Culture of the American Whigs *(University of Chicago Press) and the forthcoming* What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848 *(Oxford University Press).*

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Book Review by Forrest McDonald

Sage Advice

What Would the Founders Do? Our Questions, Their Answers,
by Richard Brookhiser. Basic Books, 261 pages, $26

Although Richard Brookhiser's new book is fairly small, the undertaking was colossal. I am aware of only a handful of historians who understand America's founders well enough to speculate—intelligently—about things they did not consider; and of those, I know virtually none who is well-enough versed in current events to address the burning issues of our time. The author of perceptive and stimulating biographies of several of the leading 18th-century Americans, Brookhiser is eminently qualified on the first count, and has the additional advantage of writing with the fluency of his subjects. (Historians tend to write in the fashion of those they study, which means that historians of, say, 17th-century England are notoriously abstruse and long-winded.) As for current events, Brookhiser's other hat is that of senior editor at *National Review*, which makes him about as up-to-date as one can be, albeit with a special slant.

In regard to a few subjects of recent concern, the founders appear at first blush to have been quite unenlightened. I refer in particular to their attitudes toward Indians, women, and blacks. George Washington had more experience with Indians than any other founder. Though he regarded frontiersmen as "banditti" whose greed for Indian lands would inevitably lead to strife and armed conflict, he realistically expected that, "the gradual extension of our settlements will as certainly cause the savage as the wolf to retire; both being beasts of prey tho' they differ in shape." Jefferson romanticized Indians, but he expected them to suffer the fate that Washington foresaw. Only John Marshall among the founders, ruling in the *Cherokee v. Georgia* case, held that Indians were a distinct community with rights that had to be respected under the Constitution, and he was overruled by Andrew Jackson. As Brookhiser points out, however, Marshall's view ultimately prevailed, which explains how Indian tribes today are permitted to operate gambling establishments where gambling is otherwise illegal.

As for women, Brookhiser includes the almost mandatory letter that Abigail Adams wrote to her husband in March 1776, urging that "in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors." Historians normally cite the passage to introduce the proposition that women were regarded as inferior to men and were so treated by law and custom. To a considerable extent the characterization is accurate, for women could own real property only in South Carolina, were generally excluded from education, and were discriminated against in various ways. Brookhiser notes, however, that women were allowed to vote in New Jersey until the turn of the nineteenth century—the first place on earth where that was the case; that some men (notably Aaron Burr) heartily supported the education of women and saw to it that their own wives and daughters received full education; and, most tellingly, that several founders, including Washington and Gouverneur Morris, solicited and followed the advice of women whose judgment they trusted. Of course, as these men well knew, Louis XV also listened closely to the opinions of certain women at his court. Indeed, the position of official mistress to the king was a quite powerful one in 18th-century France. In America, things were different.

And as for blacks, Brookhiser notes flatly that the "Founders did not successfully deal with slavery," an indisputable observation; but he adds to that statement something of a qualification, "and only marginally with its effects." Those marginal dealings were nonetheless impressive, at least among certain of the founders. For instance, during the Revolution, Hamilton and his friend John Laurens proposed to raise four battalions of black slaves in South Carolina that would be given "their freedom with their muskets." Laurens himself would command the unit. The two colonels persuaded Washington to approve their plan, but the legislature of South Carolina refused its consent. Even so, blacks (slave and free) fought under Washington's command in New England, and of the 12,000 men who fought at the battle of Monmouth, "eight hundred were blacks or Indians."

The antislavery forces in New York, headed by Hamilton, John Jay, and Governor George Clinton, made considerable strides toward responsible emancipation. In 1785 they founded the New York Manumission Society, one of whose undertakings was to set up an African Free School for both boys and girls to teach them reading, writing, and avoiding "habits of

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idleness." By 1823 the school comprised nearly 900 pupils, "more than half the black children of school age in New York City. Its graduates included professionals, clergymen and one of the founders of Liberia." Moreover, in New York and surrounding states blacks were eligible to vote, and as is well known, the courts of Massachusetts had declared that slavery was abolished there by the constitution that John Adams had written for the state.

Then, in a class by himself, was Washington. He freed his slaves by his last will and testament, providing that the youth among them be taught to read and write and "be brought up to some useful occupation." Those who were too old to support themselves were provided a livelihood for as long as they lived.

BEYOND THESE TOPICS, BROOKHISER finds that the founders provide prudent counsel for a wide range of modern concerns. Among these are gun control, the war on drugs, response to natural disasters, religion in politics, luxury taxes, outsourcing, the environment, social security, legalized gambling, conscription, foreign relations, tuition tax credits and private school vouchers, journalists and their sources, children born out of wedlock, the right to privacy, campaign finance, term limits, and poll-driven politics.

Sometimes the modern questions that Brookhiser addresses to the founders seem inappropriate. Take weapons of mass destruction, for instance. Obviously nuclear bombs and chemical warfare were unknown in the 18th century. Germ warfare, on the other hand, was decidedly known and perhaps practiced. During Pontiac's rebellion after the French and Indian War, British commander Sir Jeffrey Amherst proposed that blankets infected with smallpox be distributed among the "disaffected tribes of Indians." The evidence is unclear as to whether that was actually done, but a deadly outbreak of smallpox occurred soon thereafter. Moreover, Washington suspected that in 1775 the British deliberately infected his army in New England; deaths from smallpox among his troops were devastating. Americans, for their part, were appalled by the prospect, and at Valley Forge Washington had his army inoculated against the disease, lest the British resort to germ warfare (again?).

Three modern topics that Brookhiser treats relate to subjects closely associated with President George W. Bush and his critics. At first Brookhiser asks, "Would the founders support spreading democracy around the world?" On the whole, Brookhiser is skeptical, for the founders did not believe that democracy could work in the United States. In a democracy, James Madison wrote, the "passion or interest" of majorities was unrestrained. "Hence it is that [pure] democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention." Hamilton never called the people "a great beast," as Henry Adams claimed (though in a paraphrase), but in the last letter he wrote he did declare that "our real disease... is DEMOCRACY." Both Hamilton and Madison, along with most Americans, believed that the zeal for democracy in revolutionary France would lead to violence, corruption, and tyranny. They were right, but as Brookhiser whimsically notes, France ultimately produced two stable republican regimes (1871-1940 and 1958-present), and "[i]f even France has had some success with democracy, perhaps other nations can as well."

A related question is whether the founders would fear an American empire. "Emperors were devil figures in the historical imagination of the founders.... But empires do not have to have emperors." Washington could refer to America as a "rising empire." Jefferson grew ecstatic in predicting national expansion, and he exulted that if the nation reached its ultimate limits "we should have such an empire for liberty" that the world had never "surveyed since the creation." Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton shared the view that America could be "an empire and a republic at the same time." To the founding generation, a federal republic was a republican empire—reconciling the rights of the periphery with the demands of central power.

UNCONNECTED WITH THOSE CONcerns, but a hot-button issue in the summer of 2006, is immigration. What kind of immigration policy would the founders have espoused, you may ask. In principle most wanted to encourage immigration, though in the Constitutional Convention questions were raised about assimilation, with the result that residency requirements of seven years were stipulated for members of the House and nine years for the Senate, and the president was required to be a natural-born citizen. Assimilation became a heated question during the 1790s, because French and Irish immigrants overwhelmingly voted for Republicans and against Federalists. Reacting to that tendency, the Federalist-dominated Congress of 1798 raised the residency requirement for citizenship from five years to fourteen.

Perhaps the oddest summary of the mixed attitudes was Gouverneur Morris's in the Constitutional Convention. Morris cited the practice of some Indian tribes of extending "hospitality so far as to offer to strangers their wives and daughters." That, he said, was no "proper model for us." He would "admit them to his house, he would invite them to his table, would provide for them comfortable lodging; but would not carry the complaisance so far as, to bed them with his wife."

At the end Brookhiser asks, "What would the founders think of this book?" With becoming (if exasperating) modesty, he skirts the question. I shall not be so squeamish. Having lived with the framers most of my adult life, I assert confidently that they would have loved it.

Forrest McDonald is Distinguished University Research Professor Emeritus at the University of Alabama, and author most recently of Recovering the Past: A Historian's Memoir *(University Press of Kansas).*

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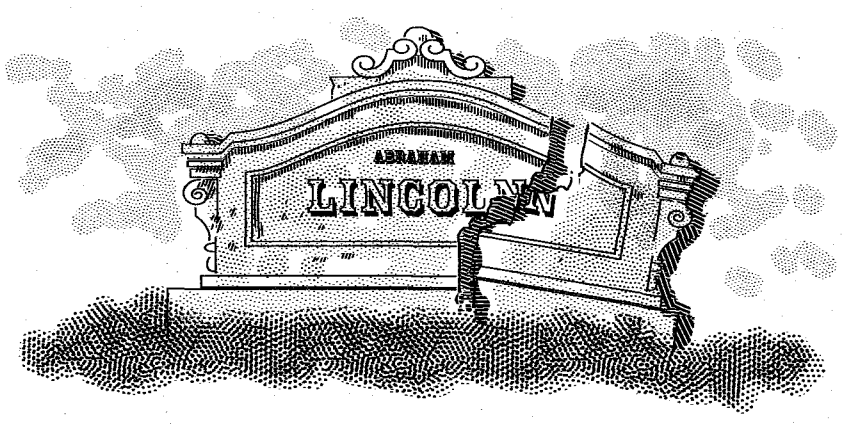
Book Review by Diana Schaub

Mystic Chords of Memory

Lincoln's American Dream: Clashing Political Perspectives, edited by Kenneth L. Deutsch and Joseph R. Fornieri.
Potomac Books, 544 pages, $60 (cloth), $29.95 (paper)



The cornerstone of the Lincoln Memorial was laid in 1915 on Lincoln's birthday. Above the seated president runs the inscription: "In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever." The opening lines of Lord Charnwood's biography, published the next year, confirm that Lincoln's memory was indeed fixed in American hearts:

> The subject of this memoir is revered by multitudes of his countrymen as the preserver of their commonwealth. This reverence has grown with the lapse of time and the accumulation of evidence. It is blended with a peculiar affection, seldom bestowed upon the memory of statesmen. It is shared today by many who remember with no less affection how their own fathers fought against him. He died with every circumstance of tragedy, yet it is not the accident of his death but the purpose of his life that is remembered.

Is this still so? While Americans could never forget Lincoln, there is a real danger of misunderstanding him. If memory is falsified long and thoroughly enough, the results can be worse than mere forgetting.

Lincoln was very interested in the phenomenon of memory, and especially its unreliability. It is a theme in his writing from the Lyceum Address in 1838 to the Gettysburg Address in 1863. The former closes with a meditation upon "the silent artillery of time" and the need for pillars of Union more perduring than the crumbling memories of the Revolutionary War. To supply the place of memory, Lincoln recommends pillars "hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason." Similarly, the Gettysburg Address states that commemoration is insufficient: "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." It is customary to remark the irony of these lines, occurring in the most famous and memorized of speeches. Nonetheless, if Lincoln had not succeeded in redirecting the energies of the living away from lamentation and toward the "unfinished work" and "great task remaining," his self-deprecating prediction would have come true. His words are remembered not for what they said but what they did. Lincoln declined to dedicate the cemetery ground, instead rededicating the nation to its founding thought or "proposition." Even in the First Inaugural, which appeals to the "mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land," we learn that those chords require something else in order to be sounded. The "mystic chords of memory" must be "touched...by the better angels of our nature." The better angels are those that dispose us to "think calmly and *well*."

Another Lincoln text in which memory figures is a poem, written in 1846, entitled "My Childhood-Home I See Again." There, Lincoln begins in an elegiac vein:

> O memory! Thou mid-way world
> 'Twixt Earth and Paradise,
> Where things decayed, and loved ones lost
> In dreamy shadows rise.
>
> And freed from all that's gross or vile,
> Seem hallowed, pure, and bright,
> Like scenes in some enchanted isle,
> All bathed in liquid light.

But we soon learn Mnemosyne's limits. Memory cannot "hallow" all personages and events. Lincoln tells of meeting a companion of his youth ("Once of genius bright") who went murderously mad ("Yourself you maimed, your father fought, / And mother strove to kill") and who is now "A human-form, with reason fled, / While wretched life remains." In returning to his childhood home, Lincoln confronted elements of unreasoning horror that the clouds of memory had disguised. His response, set forth in the last two stanzas, is to seek the ground, quite literally, of his being: "The very spot where grew the bread / That formed my bones, I see." This "old field" is solid and life-giving. Contact with it restores his mental equanimity.

In many of his references to memory, Lincoln suggests that a faded or false view of the past can harm the future. For instance, in the Cooper Union Address (1860), Lincoln complains of "invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did." Being misty-eyed or bleary-eyed about the past leaves us vulnerable to sophistry. Our acquaintance with the past must be fully mindful.

If Lincoln is right, then the popular Lincoln-memory cannot be sustained by memorials and museums—fine though they may be. A true re-minding requires that we think again the thoughts of Lincoln. The Lincoln Memorial goes about as far as stone and mortar can to facilitate that encounter; it contains on facing walls the full texts of the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural. I don't know of another civic monument that presents unabridged speeches. The Washington is silent and soaring; the Jefferson offers orotund sound-bites; the Roosevelt is more pictorial. I have always been

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struck by how many visitors to the Lincoln Memorial stand and read both speeches, and how hushed the atmosphere is within those engraved walls (an architectural expression of Lincoln's "political religion" of "reverence for the laws").

Nonetheless, the memory of Lincoln will be decisively influenced by the partisans of mindfulness. For much of the last century, scholars (usually historians and political scientists) have been contesting Lincoln's significance. *Lincoln's American Dream: Clashing Political Perspectives* assembles almost three dozen, mostly previously published essays (the earliest dating from 1929, the most recent from 2000) divided into eight thematic sections. On each topic, the main lines of interpretation are represented by four or five significant essays, many of them by eminent scholars in the field. The volume comprises 500 pages of brutally small print. Font size apart, the book is an invaluable resource.

THROUGH THEIR JUDICIOUS SELECTIONS, the editors, Kenneth L. Deutsch and Joseph R. Fornieri, have created a sort of battle map, like the panoramic one at Gettysburg National Park that shows with lighted bulbs the array of opposing forces and the shifting lines of engagement. The central front in the scholarly wars is on view in the book's opening chapter, "Lincoln, the Declaration, and Equality," which pits Lincoln-haters Willmoore Kendall and M.E. Bradford against Lincoln's greatest philosophic defender, Harry V. Jaffa. (If you have time for only one 500-page Lincoln book this year, make it Jaffa's *A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War.*) From that initial clash of the big guns, the battle fans out into lesser skirmishes, like that in chapter four over the character of "Lincoln's Democratic Political Leadership: Utopian, Pragmatic, or Prudent?" The action on the flanks, however, can be brilliant and significant on the model of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain's maneuvers on Gettysburg's Little Round Top.

The Chamberlain of this volume is Ralph Lerner, whose essay "Lincoln's Revolution" is a beautifully composed exploration of Lincoln's unique oratory. In a land where, as Tocqueville said, the majority "lives in perpetual adoration of itself," how can one "make certain truths reach the ears of the Americans"? Tocqueville thought only "foreigners or experience" could do it, but Lerner reveals how a politician who actually won elections did it:

No aspiring politician needs to be told that there is a public pulse to be taken, and no halfway competent politician needs to grope for long to take it. Lincoln is more than halfway competent. He understands from the outset and with perfect clarity that the realm of politics is the realm of opinion. He sees that any speaker who would induce a people to hold a critical opinion of itself must first induce it to trust and have a good opinion of himself. But it will presumably not trust or have a good opinion of one who criticizes the opinions it holds dear. It would seem, then, that in order to gain a hearing for his critical, nonflattering speech, a speaker must first dissemble his critical opinions and flatter his audience, thus exacerbating the very sickness he wishes to cure.

Lincoln escapes his dilemma in a manner worthy of study. He flatters the people and gains their trust, not by catering to their present noncritical opinions of themselves and their affairs, but by bringing them with him, as equals somehow, into the problem of public opinion as such. He takes them into his confidence and makes them his partners in seeking a solution for the problem of popular government. And in this he succeeds. Not the least of Lincoln's extraordinary political achievements is his success in making general an awareness of the problem of public opinion—his nurturing of an opinion about the signal importance of opinion. A greater achievement, yet impossible without the first, is his persuading many American people to criticize and repudiate the many base opinions about political right and prudence that their base flatterers would have them basely cling to. His *kalam* is directed against the enemy within.

TWO OTHER EXCELLENT ESSAYS ARE DEployed in the religion section, William Lee Miller's analysis of the Second Inaugural and Michael P. Zuckert's interpretation of the Lyceum Address. Doubtless, these judgments bespeak my own preference for textual explication and commentary, but both of these essays are careful, insightful contributions to our understanding of Lincoln as a political thinker and actor.

Because the chapter divisions are inevitably overlapping, a straight read through the book yields a fair amount of repetition. So, we get Lincoln as tyrant from every angle: the "heresy of equality" in chapter 1, his Caesar-like ambition in chapter 2, his misuse of presidential power in

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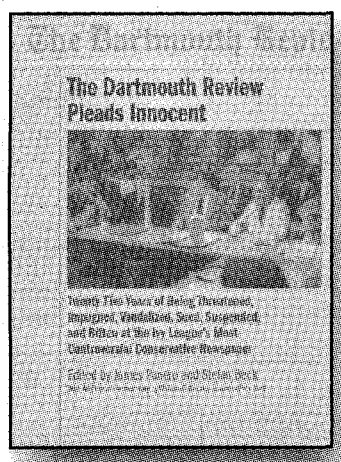

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chapter 5, and Lincoln "the great centralizer" in chapter 7, along with, of course, the refutations of such character assassination. Surprisingly, one overlooked issue in the volume is the question of secession. Neither the chapter on "Lincoln and Executive Power" nor that on "Lincoln, the Union, and the Role of the State" contains an essay setting forth the grounds for Lincoln's view of secession as unrightful rebellion. Accordingly, just about the only well-known Lincoln quote that does not appear in these pages is the ballots and bullets passage from Lincoln's message to the special session of Congress in 1861:

> Our popular government has often been called an experiment. Two points in it, our people have already settled—the successful *establishing*, and the successful *administering* of it. One still remains—its successful *maintenance* against a formidable internal attempt to overthrow it. It is now for them to demonstrate to the world, that those who can fairly carry an election, can also suppress a rebellion—that ballots are the rightful, and peaceful, successors of bullets; and that when ballots have fairly, and constitutionally, decided, there can be no successful appeal, back to bullets; that there can be no successful appeal, except to ballots themselves, at succeeding elections.

The defenders of Lincoln win every engagement in this volume, but the case for Lincoln should include a deeper exploration of the rightfulness of the Union cause.

Although no single volume can contain all of the best pieces on Lincoln, I missed two remarkable essays from the 19th century. Frederick Douglass's "Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln," delivered at the unveiling of the Freedmen's Monument in 1876, would have served as a fitting opening to chapter 3, "Lincoln, Race, and Slavery." Douglass's verdict on the priority of Union over Emancipation in the statesmanship of Lincoln has never been bettered:

> His great mission was to accomplish two things: first, to save his country from dismemberment and ruin; and, second, to free his country from the great crime of slavery. To do one or the other, or both, he must have the earnest sympathy and the powerful cooperation of his loyal fellow-countrymen. Without this primary and essential condition to success his efforts must have been vain and utterly fruitless. Had he put the abolition of slavery before the salvation of the Union, he would have inevitably driven from him a powerful class of the American people and rendered resistance to rebellion impossible. Viewed from the genuine abolition ground, Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull, and indifferent; but measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, he was swift, zealous, radical, and determined.

Walt Whitman's lecture, "The Death of Abraham Lincoln," first delivered in 1879, might have been paired with the second Bradford essay, "The Lincoln Legacy: A Long View." Whitman's address is a sustained reflection on the meaning of Lincoln's martyrdom. Whereas Whitman celebrates our "first great Martyr Chief," Bradford seeks to "devise a way of setting aside the martyrdom," recognizing in it an obstacle to his attempted impeachment of the man. Alternatively, the Whitman piece might have been paired with George Anastaplo's essay, "Walt Whitman's Abraham Lincoln." In his otherwise largely critical assessment of the poet's vision, Anastaplo remarks that Whitman's Lincoln lecture is superior to his Lincoln poetry. The lecture deserves wider circulation.

Finally, given that Edmund Wilson's essay, "Abraham Lincoln: The Union as Religious Mysticism" (first published in 1954 and later collected in *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*) gave such a boost to the psychologizing trend, it should have been included, especially since a number of authors respond either directly to it or its Freudian progeny. Just so we know that the influence of literary critics may not always be baleful, Jacques Barzun's wonderful sketch, "Lincoln the Literary Artist" (1959), would have made a fine addition, too.

Clearly, there is no dearth of writing about Lincoln. Perhaps we have Wilson, Bradford, and company partly to thank for bringing forth so many wise defenders of Lincoln even as the "insidious debauching of the public mind" first begun by Calhoun eventually brought forth Lincoln. But perhaps this gives the academic Calhounites too much credit. Charnwood said of Calhoun that he was a man of "powerful enough" intellect, but "undisturbed in his logical processes by good sense, healthy sentiment, or any vigorous appetite for truth." Such men will always be with us. Our gratitude is due to those scholars who delve for truth and who thereby bring citizens to a deeper, more knowing reverence. One hopes that Americans will revere Lincoln, if not "forever," then, as Lincoln said of Washington, "to the last."

Diana Schaub is chairman of the political science department at Loyola College in Maryland.

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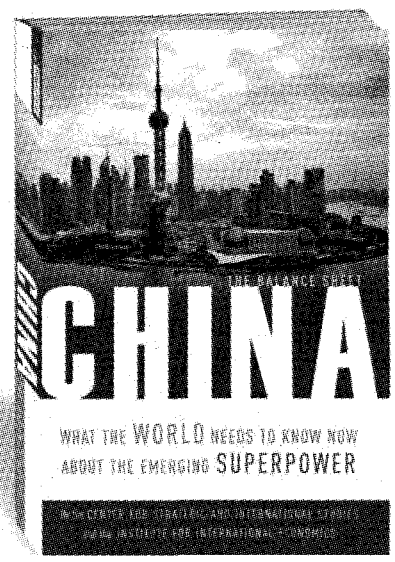

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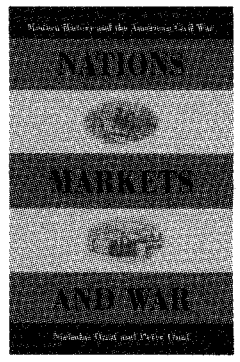

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Book Review by Jean Edward Smith

A People's History of Reconstruction

Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction, by Eric Foner.
Alfred A. Knopf, 304 pages, $27.50 (cloth), $15 (paper)

Few aspects of American history have been subject to such fluctuating interpretations as the causes and consequences of the Civil War. My generation was assured during the 1930s, '40s, and '50s that slavery had nothing to do with secession, that it was purely a matter of conflicting constitutional interpretation, including such esoteric points as the Supreme Court's ultimate jurisdiction under §25 of the Judiciary Act of 1789. Yet today, to reject slavery as the Civil War's root cause is akin to denying the Holocaust.

Coming to grips with Reconstruction has proved even more difficult. Americans have been weaned on *Gone With The Wind*'s rosy depiction of the antebellum South, with gleeful pickaninnies frolicking in massa's cotton patch. For too long, Reconstruction has been widely regarded as a time of rampant misgovernment thrust on the South by a vindictive cabal of Radical Republicans abetted by unscrupulous carpetbaggers, duplicitous scalawags, and former slaves totally lacking any capacity for self-government.

The tone of American historiography concerning Reconstruction was set by William A. Dunning, Lieber Professor of History and Political Philosophy at Columbia, and his colleague John W. Burgess, a founder of modern political science. Dunning's principal effort, *Reconstruction: Political and Economic, 1865-1877* (1907), is replete with references to "barbarous freedmen" committing "the hideous crime against white womanhood," and corrupt northern politicians willing to force opponents "of their own race...to permanent subjugation to another race." Burgess, in *Reconstruction and the Constitution* (1902), taught that "a black skin means membership in a race of men which has never of itself succeeded in subjecting passion to reason, and has never, therefore, created any civilization of any kind."

Between 1876 and 1922 Dunning and Burgess directed the research of two generations of graduate students. Known as the "Dunning school," the works of these disciples include Robert Stiles's *Reconstruction in Virginia* (1890), Walter L. Fleming's *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (1905), Charles W. Ramsdell's *Reconstruction in Texas* (1910), W.W. Davis's *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (1913), J.G. deRoulhac Hamilton's *Reconstruction in North Carolina* (1914), C. Mildred Thompson's *Reconstruction in Georgia* (1915), and Thomas S. Staples's *Reconstruction in Arkansas* (1923). Researched from primary sources and presented with an air of objectivity, these dissertations were acclaimed for their application of the scientific method to history.

Yet despite every intention to be fair, these students, like Dunning and Burgess themselves, shaped their monographs to support prevailing attitudes of white supremacy. Blacks were depicted as inherently incapable of meaningful political participation while terrorist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan were applauded for their efforts to restore the South's natural order. Of some 16 studies of Reconstruction in the Southern states, only James Wilford Garner's *Reconstruction of Mississippi* (1901) did not exhibit a pronounced bias in favor of white supremacy, earning the praise of W.E.B. DuBois, who himself penned the first sustained scholarly critique of Reconstruction.

The racist rants of the Dunning school reinforced northern efforts to conciliate the white South. These found popular expression in D.W. Griffith's repugnant *Birth of a Nation*, hailed by President Woodrow Wilson for its depiction of Southern life during Reconstruction; James Ford Rhodes's classic seven-volume chronicle of the Civil War era; and the 1920s national bestseller, *The Tragic Era*, by the well-known journalist Claude G. Bowers. With the civil rights revolution of the 1950s and '60s, the work of an imposing array of contemporary historians—including David Blight, David Herbert Donald, Eric Foner, John Hope Franklin, Eric McKitrick, James McPherson, Kenneth Stampp, and Hans Trefousse—consigned the Dunning school to the museum of historical artifacts.

Foner is America's preeminent historian of Reconstruction and, fittingly, the DeWitt Clinton Professor of History in the same department in which Dunning taught. His masterly *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (first published in 1988) may be the best treatment of Reconstruction in print. But it is written for the serious student and informed scholar. His new book, *Forever Free*, is a superbly written, wonderfully condensed restatement intended for readers basically unfamiliar with the details of American history, particularly concerning the Civil War and its aftermath. His narrative is strengthened by visual essays interspersed between his chapters, which collect contemporary illustrations and photographs together with commentary by Joshua Brown, Executive Director of the American Social History Project at the City University of New York's Graduate Center.

The Civil War was not a war between the states and certainly not a war between sovereign nations. It was a treasonous rebellion mounted by the governments in eleven Southern states for the primary purpose of protecting slavery. It was suppressed by the United States Army after four years of bloody conflict. The bravery of those Confederate soldiers who fought to perpetuate the cause of slavery should not be disparaged. But it is for good reason that the rebel dead are not interred in cemeteries maintained by the United States.

Foner begins *Forever Free* with a brief account of American slavery, its exponential growth tied to the world's insatiable desire for cotton. "By 1860, the economic value of property in slaves amounted to more than the sum of all the money invested in railroads, banks, and factories in the United States." The coming of the war is treated gingerly. Foner sketches Lincoln's initial concern not to alienate the four slave states that remained in the Union (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri), and carefully charts his march to the Emancipation Proclamation.

"The proclamation transformed a war of armies into a conflict of societies," Foner writes, and he emphasizes the significance of African Americans serving in the Army of the United States. It is a quibble, but he might have addressed more explicitly the impact of the Proclamation on the South's balance sheets—slaves were no longer assets and could no longer be pledged as collateral. The point is implicit, but the public might profit from being reminded.

His treatment of the 13th Amendment, Sherman's famous Field Order 15 (forty acres and a mule), and the creation of the Freedmen's Bureau is balanced and fair. He notes Frederick Douglass's remark that "the work does not end with the abolition of slavery, but only begins," and the heart of *Forever Free* deals with what Foner calls "the meaning of freedom": a terrain

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of conflict in which the former slaves, the white South, and the victorious North each supplied an interpretation.

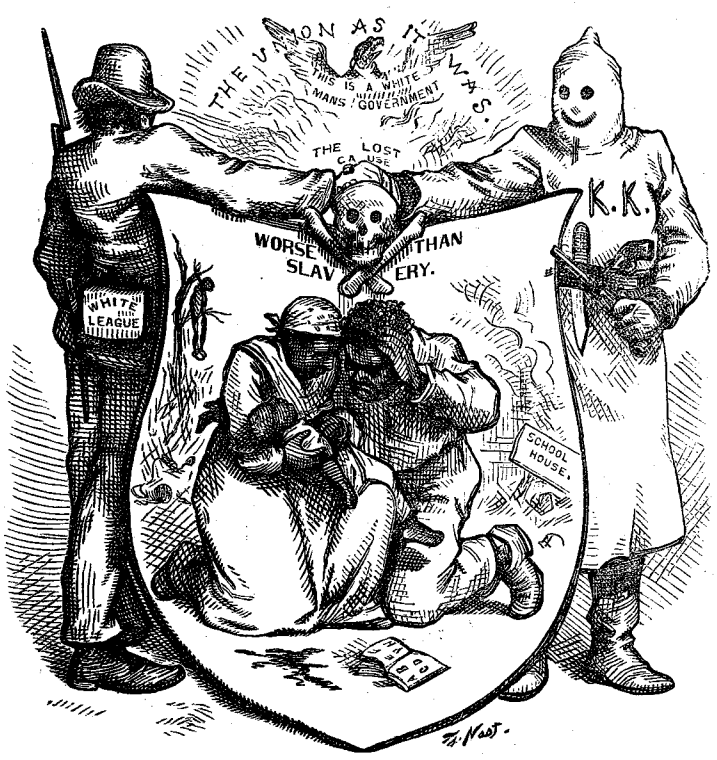
The book is properly critical of Andrew Johnson's efforts to restore the South to what amounted to the status quo ante. "Apart from requirements that they abolish slavery, repudiate secession, and abrogate the Confederate debt—all inescapable consequences of the South's defeat—these [State] governments were granted a free hand in managing their affairs." He calls the conflict between Congress and the president over Reconstruction one of the greatest crises in American history and asks tantalizingly whether a smooth transition (such as Lincoln might have engineered) would have been in the nation's interest. "The crisis created by Johnson's intransigence and incompetence was, in a sense, the creative element in the situation. It pushed members of Congress into uncharted political waters, eventually leading them to embark on a wholly unprecedented experiment in interracial democracy."

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 (the first significant piece of legislation to be passed over a president's veto), the Reconstruction Act of 1867, the Enforcement Act of 1870, the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, and the 14th and 15th Amendments not only reflected the national government's enhanced power but the idea of a national citizenry enjoying equality before the law. The Reconstruction amendments in particular, as Foner points out, "transformed the Constitution from a document concerned primarily with federal-state relations and the rights of property into a vehicle through which members of vulnerable minorities could stake a claim to substantive freedom and seek protection against misconduct by all levels of government." And it was for precisely this reason that they aroused such bitter opposition.

Foner highlights the determination of recently emancipated black Americans who struggled to secure their political equality. His treatment of church, family, and the rise of public education within the black community under the South's Reconstruction regimes is especially good. Skillfully he charts the demise of Reconstruction; the sordid outcome of the 1876 Hayes-Tilden election; the role of violence and terror; and the betrayal of the South's black population by a North no longer interested in equality. "The resurgence of racism was both cause and effect of the nation's abandonment of the Reconstruction idea of color-blind citizenship."

The Supreme Court marched in step with prevailing attitudes of white supremacy. Foner recounts the Court's role in overturning Reconstruction legislation and emasculating the 14th and 15th Amendments. After *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, racial segregation became a constitutionally sanctioned way of life. Jim Crow, "separate but equal," electoral disenfranchisement, economic inequality, and the return of violence, lynching, and mayhem characterized black Americans' unhappy fate.

In an eloquent epilogue titled "The Unfinished Revolution," Foner charts the progress made during the civil rights era, which he calls the Second Reconstruction, and in the half-century since. He pays just tribute to Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks and alludes to John Kennedy's use of federal power to enforce integration at Ole Miss in 1962. He neglects President Eisenhower's more decisive action five years earlier when he ordered the 101st



Airborne Division into Little Rock, Arkansas, to compel compliance with a court order desegregating Central High. Although Eisenhower believed that the Supreme Court's original decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* was wrong, he took his Article II responsibility to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed" at face value. No focus groups were convened and no opinion polls were taken even though it was a presidential election year. Eisenhower responded instantly with overwhelming force to prevent mob rule. Had he not done so, desegregation in the South would have been set back at least a decade.

Foner's epilogue also sets out an agenda for further political reform, and it is here that *Forever Free* is most hampered by its author's well-known Marxism. For Foner, Reconstruction and the civil rights movement are the real unfinished American revolution, pointing toward unprecedented economic democracy and social justice. Among other things, his ideological preconceptions keep him from recognizing the role of athletics and the large national chains in breaking down segregationist attitudes in the South. Wal-Mart is a favorite whipping boy for liberal activists, but it is also an equal-opportunity employer in which African-American shoppers no longer are required to step aside for a white customer. Sam Walton put thousands of small merchants out of business in county seats throughout the rural South and he advanced the cause of racial justice in the process, just as McDonald's, another equal-opportunity employer, drove hundreds of segregated Mom and Pop greasy spoons to the wall.

But it has been athletics that has changed the face of the South. When Bear Bryant desegregated the Crimson Tide in 1971, every team in the Southeastern Conference followed suit. When the colleges and universities integrated their squads, the high schools did the same. It is sometimes difficult for ivory-towered academics like myself to appreciate the role of high school athletics in shaping the South's community values. But Friday night football and basketball are major social events. And it is almost impossible to retain the racial hostility that once came instinctively while cheering on the local team with young black men and women playing prominent roles. My family has resided for generations on a farm near a small hill town in northern Mississippi. Racial tension was always just beneath the surface. When the local high school was integrated in 1974 and the student body elected a black homecoming queen, the Ku Klux Klan torched the school that evening. Twenty years later when the school won the state-wide women's basketball championship, the entirely black team became the toast of the town with billboards erected throughout the county touting their accomplishment.

Still, my criticism is more concerned with what Foner does *not* say. Rather than what he does. This is a superb book. The author writes with lucid precision and has crafted a compelling narrative of Emancipation and Reconstruction that is easily accessible to the general reader. He possesses an encyclopedic understanding of the subject. Reconstruction was not simply a Civil War hiccup. The failed effort to provide for black equality continues to reverberate through American society.

Jean Edward Smith is John Marshall Professor of Political Science at Marshall University. FDR, his biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt, will be published by Random House in 2007.

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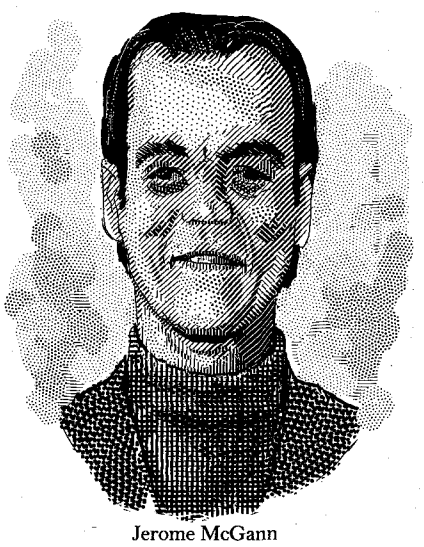
Book Review by Barton Swaim

Florid Balderdash

The Scholar's Art: Literary Studies in a Managed World, by Jerome McGann.
University of Chicago Press, 239 pages, $55 (cloth), $22 (paper)



Jerome McGann

Over the past forty years, literary theorists have taken command of the English departments of American universities. What this would mean for the study of literature was made clear early on by (among others) Terry Eagleton in his hugely influential *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983). There Eagleton explained that literature can only be understood through the lens of "social ideologies" that "refer in the end not simply to private taste, but to the assumptions by which certain social groups exercise and maintain power over others." In other words, the task of the scholar and critic is to understand not chiefly the literary works themselves, but those competing social ideologies for which literature is only one of many arenas. What matters in literary theory is theory rather than literature, critic rather than author, radical politics rather than imagination or beauty.

"New Historicism," a theoretical approach originated chiefly by the Shakespearean scholar Stephen Greenblatt in the early 1980s, was in some ways a reaction to literary theory, which it criticized for being insufficiently historical or lacking an empirical basis. The New Historicists, wishing to ground their writings about literature in the real world, but wishing also to be as politically cutting-edge as the high-flying proponents of literary theory, proposed to use traditional historicist methods to arrive at interpretations conducive to a leftist outlook. In practice, this usually meant saying whatever one liked about a work of literature with perfunctory reference to some historical evidence, and in that sense New Historicism was new but not recognizably historicist. Still, it was a gesture in the direction of sanity in a field desperately in need of it.

The New Historicists share an array of philosophical assumptions, most prominently those associated with the seductive anti-philosophy of Michel Foucault. They suppose that all human relationships are definable solely in terms of power, that people who possess power use language as a tool to exclude those who do not, and that works of literature may therefore be understood primarily as attempts to attain some form of political or cultural authority. In reality, of course, the New Historicists aren't primarily concerned with literature, and have only quiet disdain for the notion that literature may access universal or imperishable truth. Their interest (insofar as they have interests beyond professional ones) is the same as that of all contemporary literary theorists: cultural politics. Shakespeare and Wordsworth are interesting only insofar as analyzing their works leads to a discussion of Western male hegemony or some such monstrous abstraction. It is hardly surprising, then, that the great majority of New Historicist "scholars" are in fact left-wing cranks with a modest ability to master jargon.

Jerome McGann is no crank. A specialist in the field of Romantic and Victorian British poetry, McGann is the most capable scholar in the school of New Historicism and second only to Greenblatt himself in popularity. His politics are clearly on the left, and just as clearly animate his writings, but he has generally shown more circumspection in his recourse to leftist ideological themes than most literary theorists and many New Historicists. His best known work, *The Romantic Ideology* (1983), took aim at scholars whose treatments of the "big six" male poets (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Keats, Shelley) had accepted uncritically those poets' representation of themselves as possessors of godlike insight and thus "above" considerations of money or fame. McGann's arguments in that book are candidly motivated by his politics, but the book's overarching argument is a sound one, and its use of historical evidence is admirable.

More recently he has edited the *New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse* (1993), an anthology reflecting its editor's determination to promote an "inclusive" canon of English literature, even to the point of including forgettable pleasantries so long as they were written by women. Yet McGann can't be dismissed as a typical leftist academic literary critic. In the penetrating essays in his book *The Beauty of Inflections* (1985), for instance, he championed the Victorian poet Christina Rossetti, a Tractarian Christian whose religious verse most modern scholars have dismissed on professedly aesthetic, but clearly ideological, grounds. His contributions to the field of textual criticism are, though wrongheaded, genuinely enlightening. And his critique of "immanent criticism"—the notion that the meaning and beauty of a work of literature lie within the work itself and should therefore be considered in isolation from historical factors—is logically rigorous and in my view persuasive.

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It would be difficult to overstate McGann's influence among American academics in literature, and by extension over the malleable minds of university English majors and postgraduates. He is an enormously popular speaker at conferences, and what he decides to talk and write about is in due course what everybody else in his field wants to talk and write about. I was therefore thrilled to find him insisting, at the outset of his latest collection of essays, *The Scholar's Art*, that the purpose of literary scholarship is not to arrive at "manageable" interpretations of literature, but "to preserve and pass on our cultural inheritance." I was able to ignore the fact that by "manageable" he does not mean, as I would rather he meant, comfortably leftist and "transgressive." At least somebody of McGann's authority was now (so I thought) inveighing against the superficial and ham-handedly politicized "criticism" produced with such shocking regularity by tenured professors. "Asking that students read poetry 'in the same spirit that the author writ,' instead of in a spirit we would like the poet to have written (whatever our moral imperatives might be), can produce an educational experience not otherwise available."

The quotation (a misquotation, to be precise) is from Pope's *Essay on Criticism*:

> A perfect Judge will read each Work of Wit
> With the same Spirit that its Author writ.

To read an author's work in the "same Spirit" in which the author wrote it is precisely what academic literary critics for more than a generation have so conspicuously failed to do. Especially when treating the works of widely venerated white male writers, these literary judges seem incapable of fathoming any motive apart from the author's desire to assert his authority over some "field of discursive practices," to use Foucault's jargon. The result is that the author's intentions, having been defined as mere expressions of competing "social ideologies," are no longer seriously considered to be binding on the critic's interpretations—which in turn means the critic gets to talk about whatever he feels like talking about, so long as it relates somehow to those "social ideologies."

That is why so much contemporary academic criticism is either *a*) tiresome and predictable, relying on the same formulaic discussions of "cultural authority" and "discursive power," or *b*) circuitous twaddle. Unfortunately, despite its fleeting promise of something better, *The Scholar's Art* is not able to rise above these limitations, tending more to *b*) than to *a*).

MCGANN, IT SEEMS, HAVING PUSHED the New Historicist critique as far as it can go without becoming entirely predictable, now has nothing to say. The book's essays just aren't interesting. At least two are simply unreadable. In one he contrasts the views of critical authority adopted by Coleridge and Eliot (the former located authority in individual poets, the latter in an impersonal tradition), and claims that the whole of 19th- and 20th-century cultural history may be understood as a duel between these two approaches. Well, fine. But McGann spends the balance of the essay mulling aimlessly over the half-formed ideas of the Victorian poets D. G. Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne.

The essay on Walter Scott, in which McGann presents Scott as a proto-postmodern whose sophistication consists in a preoccupation with his own authorial voice, depends heavily on an embarrassingly tendentious interpretation of *Quentin Durward*, and even apart from that doesn't offer much that hasn't been said before. McGann begins another essay with a straightforward point worthy of serious attention—that Modernist writers such as Pound and Eliot were devoted to contradictory ideals, classicism and originality, and that this contradiction "produces the irony pervading [their] writing"—but then hauls in page after page of irrelevant names and concepts. The essay fizzles to nothing. Again, just when you think McGann is ready to say something important about Tennyson's poetry, he slips into the indecipherable argot of academic criticism (more pointless ruminations about D. G. Rossetti) and concludes by saying nothing in particular.

Can McGann, on the evidence of much of his previous work an extremely intelligent writer, seriously believe that these essays are worth collecting in a book? If I were inclined to interpret him in the knowing, supercilious New Historicist manner—which at this moment I am—I would suggest that he himself is concerned mainly with his own "cultural authority," unable as he is to think about literature in any other way. He imagines that his readers care more about what Jerome McGann has written than about what Coleridge or Scott or Henry James wrote. Having taken seriously modern literary theory's assumption that the critic always trumps the author, that in literary criticism what counts is the critic rather than the literature, McGann actually believes himself to be as important as the writers he discusses; in fact, far more so.

What else could explain such unbearably mannered prose, the pointless interruptions and digressions, incessant and seemingly irrelevant allusions ("as Blake knew...what J. G. Ballard called...as Gertrude Stein might say... what Freud famously called")? I offer one passage, chosen at random.

> "To what serves mortal beauty," Hopkins famously asked, and his answer—that it serves to celebrate the grandeur of God—sees poetry as a form of worship rather than a poetic tale. Read that way, it is used—as Wordsworth is used, as Wordsworth *wanted* to be used—to reify an idealist regimen and, more problematic still, an abstract and moralizing approach to art and poetry.
>
> Byron's answer to Hopkins's question would have been what Laura Riding's answer *was*: "Nothing" (*Anarchism Is Not Enough*). Mortal Beauty is not in service. It is—for good and ill alike— absolutely free. It is an egg laid by a free-ranging chicken.

Right-o.

McGann expresses contempt for the notion that a work of literature might offer something of eternal value. "'Great,' 'timeless,' 'enduring,' 'visionary.' Artistically and critically speaking, we mustn't take any of that seriously." But there is no reason to take his coy avoidance of the language of appraisal to be anything but a pose—a pose serving to enhance the authority of McGann's own writing. After all, if literature is never "great" and holds no value beyond what scholars tell us it holds at any one moment, the scholar becomes that much more important: one might even say, enduringly important. In fact, what we really ought to care about are not the poets and novelists we used to think possessed some form of "genius" (silly word), but the sophisticated *obiter dicta* of the tenured experts: preeminently, Jerome McGann, John Stewart Bryan Professor of English at the University of Virginia.

It is true, as McGann claims in the introduction, that these essays contain nothing in the way of facile politicized "readings" or soporific diatribes against phallocentrism. Instead, they offer florid balderdash, and McGann supposes we'll take it seriously because he is who he is.

Don't.

Barton Swaim received a doctorate last year from the University of Edinburgh, and is completing a book on 19th-century Scottish literary critics.

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BOOKS IN BRIEF

Painting the Map Red: The Fight to Create a Permanent Republican Majority, by Hugh Hewitt. Regnery, 256 pages, $27.95

In this hard-hitting, well-written, and practical book aimed at the strategic imperatives of the 2006 and 2008 elections, conservative radio talk-show host Hugh Hewitt lays out a plan to revive Republican fortunes, win a filibuster-proof Senate majority, and deal a knock-out blow to the Democratic Party. Hewitt argues that the Republicans' only hope for avoiding electoral disaster this year is to run a bold, nationalized campaign—instead of retreating to the localized, race-by-race approach common for incumbent parties on the defensive. Contending that Democrats are more radical than ever, he proposes a relentless attack on them as the party waging war on the military, religion, a sound judiciary, traditional marriage, and civil discourse.

Good advice as far as it goes, but the plan focuses much less on what the governing party should be for, summed up as "win the war, confirm the judges, cut the taxes, control the spending." Hewitt's call to build the Republican campaign around George W. Bush's trustworthiness (and the Democrats' lack thereof) will have to overcome the Left's three-year-long drive to cast doubt on the president's truthfulness in Iraq. Hewitt probably overestimates the long-term trouble Democrats face. With tens of millions of Americans dependent on the welfare state and liberals still dominating the mainstream media and educational establishment, it seems unlikely that Democrats will go the way of the Whigs anytime soon, even if the GOP runs flawless campaigns from coast to coast.

—Andrew E. Busch
Claremont McKenna College

Romancing Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and Addiction Bureaucracy, by Theodore Dalrymple. Encounter Books, 165 pages, $21.95

If public officials who dole out billions of dollars yearly for drug rehabilitation programs would read *Romancing Opiates*, it could spark a thorough reexamination of how we deal with addiction. Written by the witty and insightful British psychiatrist and columnist Theodore Dalrymple, this short, powerful book is one of the most important—and certainly one of the most entertaining—policy books of recent years. Dalrymple spent most of his medical career treating addicts, first at a clinic for university students and then for 14 years in a general hospital and adjacent prison in one of Britain's largest slums. He began with the conventional views: that heroin addicts are blameless, having been conned into trying the drug, only to become hopelessly trapped; that withdrawing from heroin is agonizing; that addicts need to be "treated" for long periods of time with replacement narcotics such as methadone to spare them the harsh medical consequences of withdrawal; and that addicts become criminals out of necessity to support their habit.

Dalrymple's experiences taught him otherwise. He watched many prisoners go off heroin with withdrawal symptoms no worse than a mild flu. If heroin is not highly addictive, than why do we need an elaborate network of nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, and other doctors who keep addicts dependent on substitute narcotics? "It is easier to give people a dose of medicine than a reason for living," he concludes. Heroin addiction is at bottom a moral and spiritual problem, but for decades a growing medical bureaucracy has held that patients need virtually lifelong medical maintenance. This misconception perpetuates a vast industry and has done nothing to reduce the scourge of addiction on addicts or on our society.

—Betsey McCaughey
Hudson Institute

In Praise of Athletic Beauty, by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht. Belknap Press, 272 pages, $22.95

Here is something of a marvel—a book by the Albert Guérard Professor in Literature at Stanford University that is written for the common reader, without footnotes, bibliography, or index. What's more, it is a pleasure to read. It consists of four elegant chapters written in an approachable, appreciative, meditative vein. The first is a chapter defining praise, beauty, and athletics. The second, "Discontinuities," chooses moments in the history of sports: demigods, gladiators, knights, ruffians, sportsmen, Olympians, customers. The third chapter defines what the author means by "fascinations." He chooses themes that excite all fans with a sense of beauty and wonder—bodies in motion, suffering, grace, tools, forms, plays, and timing. The fourth chapter, "Gratitude," concludes the book with original meditations on "watching" and "waste." In this delightful volume, Gumbrecht draws on his own favorite experiences, from watching hockey in Canada to watching the World Cup and other soccer games (especially those involving Germany), and most recently, watching Stanford's swim meets and football contests. He is not the first to write on these themes in a philosophical mood, but he does so with a grace that is worthy of his subject.

—Michael Novak
American Enterprise Institute

Plato's Fable: On the Mortal Condition in Shadowy Times, by Joshua Mitchell. Princeton University Press, 266 pages, $35

The "fable" in the title of this unusual book on the *Republic* is not one of the tales Socrates tells but rather the entire dialogue. Not only does Joshua Mitchell doubt that Plato was making an earnest proposal in the *Republic*; the Georgetown University government professor argues that Socrates' interlocutors can understand almost nothing that he says to them. Mitchell tries to demonstrate this and more in his short book, arguing that a recovery of Plato's understanding of reason in an age dominated by liberalism will help reveal humanity's fatal flaw, the inclination to imitate (as Plato understood it).

Although the reader might be grateful that Mitchell seldom indulges in scholarly quibbles—he barely refers to Plato scholarship at all—the author has a penchant for linking the *Republic* to a vast array of philosophic, theological, and scriptural writings that often seem malapropos. For instance, he writes as though Thrasymachus thinks like Marx, Socrates like Calvin, and as if Book VIII's cycle of regimes calls to mind Luke's Gospel and the Book of Genesis. The result is an odd and arbitrary volume that leaves little sense of what makes Plato's thought distinctively his own.

—Paul Ulrich
Carthage College

God and the Natural Law: A Rereading of Thomas Aquinas, by Fulvio Di Blasi, translated by David Thunder. St. Augustine's Press, 270 pages, $37.50

Originally published in Italian in 1999, *God and the Natural Law* is the impressive work of a young scholar, navigating through the swirling currents of modern debate over the meaning of natural law. President of the fledgling Thomas International (a planned Thomistic university) and co-director of the newly formed Ralph McInerny Center for Thomistic Studies, Fulvio Di Blasi presents a closer, far richer read-

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ing of Thomas Aquinas than is typical in these debates.

Di Blasi argues that many scholars have been unduly influenced by the fact-value distinction and other modern notions, and as a result misunderstand the role of God and nature in Aquinas's thought. The author maintains that Aquinas (and Suarez) did not think that natural law is completely external to man, based on the arbitrary will of God; nor that the natural law is completely internal to man, based on man's reason alone. Without a basis in nature, morality becomes merely a human product, and natural law ceases to be *natural*. Yet without seeing the natural order as a product of God's will (in accord with His reason), there is no sufficient obligation for man to obey the dictates of his natural ends, and the natural law ceases to be *law*. For Aquinas, the "natural law is nature revealing itself to human reason as willed by God."

—Matthew J. Peterson
The Claremont Institute

Just Americans: How Japanese Americans Won a War at Home and Abroad, by Robert Asahina. Gotham Books, 339 pages, $27.50

With his new book, influential New York editor Robert Asahina shows how Japanese Americans won equal citizenship through military service. He describes these draftees' contribution to America's effort in the Second World War with incomparable richness and detail; his account is all the more stunning when we realize that at the time nearly all black Americans were denied combat roles (other than in the Air Force).

The book breaks with Eric Muller's *Free to Die for Their Country* (2001), which claimed that the real heroes of the World War II relocation were the Japanese-American draft resisters, who allegedly followed the American political tradition of wartime dissent. (In fact, they followed the wishes of their old-country families, not their new-country traditions, however understood.) Though rejecting Muller, Asahina hews to the standard and increasingly inadequate line about the racist impulse behind the relocation. He does not take seriously how Japanese expatriates and even American citizens of Japanese ancestry might have served the needs of Japanese foreign policy; and he dismisses the possibility of significant disloyalty among ethnic Japanese, even while acknowledging the pull of nationalism. He does not confront Michelle Malkin's polemical *In Defense of Internment* (2004; see Charles A. Lofgren, "Hardships of War," *CRB*, Summer 2005) or Brian Hayashi's scholarly *Democratizing the Enemy* (2004). These books argue that there was substantial evidence of disloyalty among the ethnic Japanese population, though the volumes come to opposite conclusions about the relocation policy itself.

Nonetheless, Asahina shows movingly how these Japanese-American soldiers, by their courageous service, helped to reaffirm the equality of duties and rights as American's central idea.

—Ken Thomas
Washington, D.C.

War Footing: 10 Steps America Must Take to Prevail in the War for the Free World, by Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., *et al.* Naval Institute Press, 301 pages, $27.95

> I repeat the words of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence—that little band of patriots, fighting long ago against overwhelming odds, but certain, as we are now, of ultimate victory: "With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

This is the epigraph to Frank Gaffney's *War Footing*, taken from an address by President Franklin Roosevelt on May 14, 1941. It captures the governing purpose of the book, which is to awaken in its readers the sense of urgency that can come only from full realization that we are at war. Only such a sense of urgency will enable the nation to put itself on the "war footing" that is the necessary condition of moving forward to ultimate victory in the "war for the free world."

Each short and easily digested chapter is co-authored by Gaffney, President of the Center for Security Policy, and another defense expert. Co-authors include Victor Davis Hanson, Andrew McCarthy, Caroline Glick, and Congressmen Curt Weldon and Roscoe Bartlett. Their recommended "ten steps" range from geopolitics to energy security. An appendix contains much needed proposals to improve American missile defense policy. The book is designed so that one may consult individual chapters independently for a policy briefing on each of the necessary steps to victory.

This is a good and important book, but it faces a great challenge. Roosevelt gave the address from which Gaffney takes his epigraph six months *before* Pearl Harbor; and America was far from being ready for war when the day of infamy came. Gaffney writes five years *after* our more recent day of infamy; and America is still far from being on a war footing. If September 11 could not awaken our leaders and those who vote them into office from their strategic slumbers, this book faces a difficult challenge indeed. But when they are shaken from their complacent dreams by the next deadly alarm, this will be a useful book to have on their bedside tables.

—Tom Karako
The Claremont Institute

The British Moment: The Case for Democratic Geopolitics in the Twenty-first Century, A Manifesto by the Henry Jackson Society. The Social Affairs Unit, 128 pages, $13.99

With the ouster of Joe Lieberman, the Democratic Party seems to have thrown "Scoop" Jackson's legacy unceremoniously out the party door. But his legacy may be alive and well across the pond. The Henry Jackson Society formally proclaimed its existence in Cambridge, England, on March 11, 2005, issuing a statement of principles signed by several prominent academics, politicians, and journalists. Just a few months ago (July 14, 2006), at a gala co-hosted with the Social Affairs Unit at the Reform Club in London, the Society celebrated the publication of its first book, *The British Moment: The Case for Democratic Geopolitics in the Twenty-first Century*.

This is a slim volume of five chapters and two brief appendices. It is written and edited by several "young academics based at Cambridge University." It is issued, however, not in any individual's name (though each is credited), but as "A Manifesto by the Henry Jackson Society." The five chapters consider, in order, "Britain and"—the world, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and China. The first appendix is a one-page appreciation of Henry "Scoop" Jackson; the other is a two-page statement of the society's principles. These include: the affirmation that "the rest of the world should aspire" to be "modern liberal democracies"; support for "a 'forward strategy' to assist those countries that are not yet liberal and democratic to become so"; support for strong militaries in the United States, countries of the E.U., and other democracies, complete with "expeditionary capabilities and global reach"; the assertion that "only modern liberal democratic states are truly legitimate, and that any international organisation which admits undemocratic states on an equal basis is fundamentally flawed"; and "two cheers for capitalism."

The society dismisses accusations that it is part of the international neoconservative conspiracy. Actually, it argues that neoconservatism can perhaps best be understood as an outgrowth of centuries-old British traditions—such as the policy of abolishing the international slave trade. Anglophiles Bill Kristol, Robert Kagan, and Richard Perle are among the International Patrons of the Society.

—Christopher Flannery

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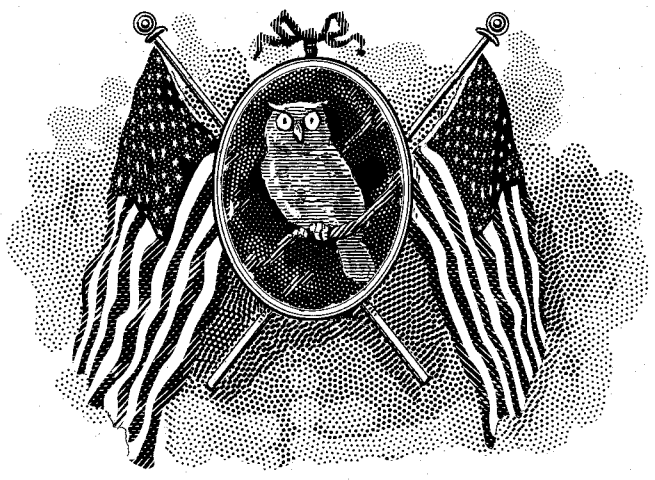
Book Review by Elihu Grant

The Right Stuff

American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia, edited by Bruce Frohnen, Jeremy Beer, and Jeffrey O. Nelson. ISI Books, 1,000 pages, $55 (cloth), $35 (paper)



If you need to find out in a hurry—and who knows when such a need might arise?—what year Walter Berns was born (1919) or how many condensed editions of *The Road to Serfdom* were distributed by the Book-of-the-Month Club at the end of World War II (600,000), you will readily find the answers in this indispensable new collection of data about the American conservative movement, published by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute and edited by Bruce Frohnen, an associate professor at Ave Maria Law School; Jeremy Beer, ISI Books's editor-in-chief; and Jeffrey O. Nelson, its publisher.

As the introduction rightly notes, quoting Ted V. McAlister, "'[T]he story of conservatism in America, as told by the academics, is fractured and inconclusive.'" The aim of the *Encyclopedia* is to provide a comprehensive reference guide to help correct this injustice, and "to contribute to the ongoing effort to understand what it has meant—and still means—to be a conservative in America." This would be quite enough on its own; and if such a project tended to emphasize traditionalist institutions and figures—given the predilections of the book's editors and publisher—it would hardly be surprising. Yet *American Conservatism* promises more: "The intent of this volume is to provide coverage of those matters of importance to each of the major schools of postwar conservative thought and to do so as evenhandedly as possible." Let us see.

First, however, there is the obligation every writer confronts when reviewing an encyclopedia, namely, to take issue with the editors' criteria for inclusion, niggle about the fidelity with which these standards were or were not followed, and lament the overall inadequacy of the final selections.

It may seem an odd criticism to make of an encyclopedia, but in this reviewer's opinion the volume is diminished—so to speak—more by what it puts in than by what it leaves out. For instance, if the editors quite properly wanted to include "only those living men and women whose careers [are] sufficiently advanced to allow for an adequate assessment of their contributions," what is David Brooks, barely ripe at age 45, doing in here?

A more serious problem is the negligible historical significance and intellectual heft of various figures deemed worthy of inclusion. Perhaps a reasonable case can be made for including Louis I. Bredvold, William H. Hutt, and Revilo P. Oliver. Going further, a full treatment of American conservatism might—one supposes—make room for Edward Atkinson, William Aylott Orton, and René de Visme Williamson. But in addition to these, *American Conservatism* includes entries on Basil L. Gildersleeve, Charles Tansill, and Donald Atwell Zoll, who, according to the entry by John Attarian, "has ceased writing on conservatism, and has apparently made a new career in elephant training." Does any encyclopedia need to be *this* comprehensive?

Readers of this journal may be interested to know that the entry on the Claremont Institute, written by Matthew Bowman, is accurate and respectful, as are all the entries on think tanks and public policy organizations. Even more graciously, the editors have generally turned over the entries on current-day intellectuals and scholars to those individuals' sympathetic students—even when this means providing significant space to people distinctly outside the paleoconservative orbit. So the entry on Harry V. Jaffa, for instance, is written by his longtime student and Claremont Institute senior fellow, Edward J. Erler.

This open-armed attitude toward presenting a conservative *omnium gatherum* not only helps to balance the somewhat indiscriminate standards mentioned earlier, it also bespeaks a laudable spirit of cordiality—vindicating the editors' claim to have sought out and welcomed "the strong opinions that often are on display, which they believe has made for a more interesting volume than would have been the case had contributors been forced into the iron cage of a supposed neutrality."

The magnanimity of these gestures would have been even more pronounced, however, if the editors had not smuggled in so many of their prejudices under the banner of "evenhandedness." Consider three of the most important subjects covered by the *Encyclopedia*: the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Civil War—the entries on which were all written by Bruce Frohnen. (As editor *primus inter pares*, Frohnen assumed responsibility for many of the book's most substantive essays.) Each begins promisingly enough, carefully heeding the editors' professed desire "not to establish any orthodox definition of conservatism." Thus, the entry on the American Revolution opens by noting:

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> The war by which the American colonies seceded from the British Empire is the subject of significant debate within the conservatism movement. What one thinks of the nature of this war says much about what one thinks of America and of conservatism as a philosophy and way of life.

A similarly ecumenical spirit guides the beginning of the entry on the Declaration, calling it

> an object of significant debate within the conservative movement because of the central and unique role some would give it within the American tradition of ordered liberty.

Yet in each case the entries proceed to elide the significance of these debates or differences, and conclude on a very different note. In the American Revolution entry, the "many" conservatives who "accept the notion that the American Revolution created a new America" quietly disappear from view. So does the circumspection of the opening paragraph. Instead, by the essay's end we are told that "for conservatives"—simply, and without further qualification—"the American Revolution does not mark an abrupt break with the politics of Britain or with an 'old world' of superstition and oppression, [but rather] the successful conservation of inherited rights by the American people."

Similarly, the essay on the Declaration of Independence devotes its concluding paragraph to the nettle of slavery—as well it should. But rather than recur to, or even mention, the Declaration's clarion endorsement of the equal, natural right to liberty, Frohnen condemns slavery on the basis of the "right" to "the protections of family and local social life." Slavery is wrong because it "strips individuals of their fundamental social ties by reducing them to commodities... no matter what ideological abstraction may be popular at the time."

Frohnen's treatment of the Civil War appears to strive for balance, but even the opening salute to intra-conservative differences goes badly awry:

> [O]ne's views on this war—and whether one prefers to call it "The Civil War," "The War between the States," or "The War of Northern Aggression"—says much about one's vision of America's central traditions and their worthiness for conservation.

This is taking the spirit of inclusiveness too far: to imply that each of these terms is an equally legitimate viewpoint within current conservative thought—merely a matter of preference—is not "encyclopedic" thoroughness; it is an effort to re-certify perhaps the most egregious case of revisionism in American history.

Lest the reader think I am inferring too much, consider how later in this entry Frohnen does not merely mute the opinions of those who dissent from the extreme traditionalist interpretation—as he often does in other entries—but misrepresents them:

> Others within the conservative movement reject southern traditions and localism altogether [and] prefer to base their vision of America and its tradition on a reading of the Declaration of Independence that sees America as a single, unitary state dedicated to the protection of individual rights. In this view, the North was morally obligated to invade the South in order to stamp out its evil, slave-based society.

Absent secession? Absent Fort Sumter? Absent military necessity? Who, exactly, in the modern conservative movement has ever propounded such a view?

Producing this encyclopedia was an enormous project; the entries took years to commission, collect, and compile. It is a wonderful resource with many virtues, and should be owned by every serious and inquisitive conservative. But in the final analysis, it is not *quite* as authoritative or evenhanded as it purports to be. I am reminded of a remark by Harvey C. Mansfield (the subject of a well-crafted entry by Daniel Mahoney) in the introduction to his translation of *The Prince*: "If the reader thinks my translation a bad one, let him try his own; if he thinks it good, let him learn Italian." In turn, I say, if the reader thinks this encyclopedia a bad one, let him try his own; but if he thinks it uniformly good, let him read more about America.

Elihu Grant is a writer living in Washington, D.C.

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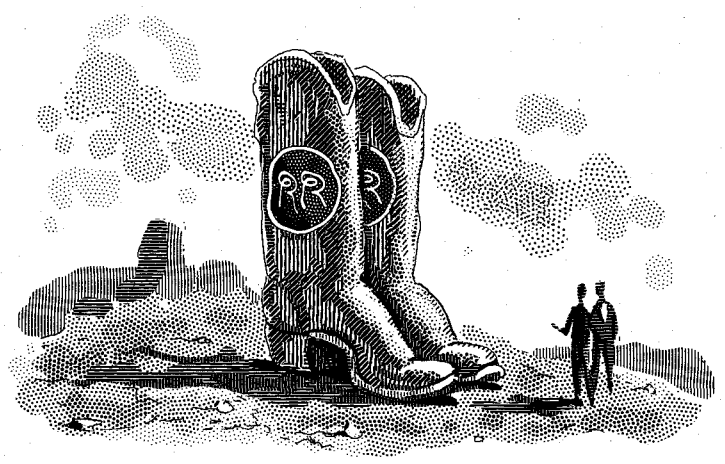
Book Review by Robert Collins

Respecting Reagan

President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination, by Richard Reeves.
Simon & Schuster, 592 pages, $30 (hardcover) $16 (paper)



Ronald Reagan was not overly concerned with the way historians would treat him. Midway through his presidency, he told an advisor, "First of all, the history will probably get distorted when it's written. And I won't be around to read it." History nevertheless promises to be obsessed with him—to date, nearly a thousand books have been written to explain one or another aspect of Reagan's rise from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of power and influence. But somehow we still have difficulty taking the measure of this political figure, who at first appears wholly transparent, yet remains vexingly elusive.

Historians have been hard on Reagan. In several widely reported rankings of the presidents undertaken since he left office, they rate him a mediocre leader. But this new book by Richard Reeves, a practicing journalist turned presidential scholar who has written well-received studies of John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, indicates that as the partisan fevers of the 1980s cool, historians are beginning to take a more temperate view of the Reagan presidency. At the same time, Reeves's engaging study shows that in giving the Gipper his due, scholars still have a ways to go.

Reeves follows Reagan chronologically from Inauguration Day, 1981, to his Farewell Address in January 1989, attempting "to reconstruct a President's world from his own perspective." His approach is especially effective in conveying the inherently hectic nature of presidential leadership, even in an administration with a tightly focused agenda and a notoriously loose presidential management style. The reader comes quickly to appreciate that at the White House, the problems just keep coming, and seldom in orderly fashion or tidy shape. A masterly writer, Reeves keeps things straight, avoids repetition, and provides just enough background information to enable the reader to grasp the significance of developments as they unfold.

Reagan emerges in these pages as a more formidable figure than the dotty stick man constructed by his political opponents and contemporary critics. Although he was no intellectual, Reagan did "see the world in terms of ideas," Reeves argues, and had a real talent for rendering his thought into compelling images and narratives. The quality of the ideas varied, however, and Reeves complains that in many cases Reagan dumbed-down the national dialogue with his penchant for oversimplification and factual misstatement. Yet the author acknowledges that Reagan saw things that others missed, such as the Soviet economy's disarray, and envisioned what many thought impossible, such as the reduction of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals.

Reeves concludes that "Reagan was not a man of vision, he was a man of imagination," but fails to explain what this invidious distinction means, though he suggests that the president's imagination ran backward more often than forward, toward a halcyon past he sought to recreate. Still, Reagan comes across as a more engaged and forceful leader than was commonly understood at the time. He was "staff-dependent but not staff-driven" and similarly wife-dependent but not wife-driven. He was his own man and in charge on the issues that mattered to him. He had the self-assurance to delegate responsibility freely—perhaps too much so—but also the self-confidence to make difficult decisions and stick to them, e.g., his firing of the striking PATCO air-controllers, or his firm support of the Federal Reserve's painful (but ultimately successful) war on inflation. As for the charge that he was merely an actor following a script prepared by his handlers, Reeves notes White House Chief of Staff James Baker's telling observation that the president "treats us all the same, as hired help."

Reagan's aging became increasingly noticeable during his second term. Despite a strong constitution and the First Lady's well-known protective efforts, he slowed discernibly. The ravages were those of age, not, so far as we know, the Alzheimer's disease that later afflicted him. In 1986, when he was 75, the speechwriter Peggy Noonan noted his "bigness and fitness, but also his frailty. I understood that he was aging. The lion in winter." The image was appropriate and occurred to others. Reagan, who had taken good care of himself since his movie days, seemed to husband his diminishing resources even more than before, and managed still to surprise those who were prepared to write him off. Reeves recounts that a Russian who observed Reagan at two summit meetings in the second term likened him to an aging lion, lazily sunning himself and gazing vaguely at an antelope on the horizon. As the antelope comes closer, the lion dozes without apparent interest. "He doesn't move when the antelope stops only

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ten feet away, that's too far. At eight feet, the lion suddenly comes to life!—Reagan, the negotiator, suddenly fills the room."

Despite such insights, the book is not a biography. Reeves concentrates not on the inner man but rather on Reagan's engagement with public affairs, trying to get at what Reagan's "official" biographer, Edmund Morris, missed almost entirely. And Reeves largely succeeds, through his vivid descriptions of the complexities of U.S. policy in Central America, the fiasco of America's involvement in Lebanon, the convolutions of the Iran-Contra affair, and so forth. Nevertheless, Reeves stumbles on several key points. One is economic policy, where his fascination with the era's spectacular budget deficits causes him to overlook the president's fundamental reorientation of economic policy—away from the demand-centered, macroeconomic Keynesianism, which had failed as both theory and policy amidst the stagflation of the 1970s, to a newly rediscovered supply-centered microeconomics that emphasized markets and incentives. The deficits that accompanied this theoretical and political shift were indeed significant, but they constituted only part of a larger story of success. Reaganomics (as its opponents derisively labeled it)—together with nascent globalization, the dawning of the Information Age, and a major restructuring of the corporate economy facilitated by Reagan's antitrust policy—laid the basis for an unprecedented two-decade-long economic boom. In part because Reeves's assessment rests largely on contemporary journalistic accounts, in this crucial area he misses the forest for the trees.

Reagan also deserves more credit for his Cold War achievements than he receives here. Reeves suggests that the President's need to bolster his political fortunes at home—first in response to an increasingly widespread public fear of nuclear war in the run-up to the 1984 election, and later in response to the political fallout from the Iran-Contra scandal—drove him to engage in the summitry and to negotiate the arms-control agreements that together effectively brought an end to the Cold War. To be sure, the so-called pragmatists among Reagan's advisors were attentive to the domestic political implications of Cold War tensions. Indeed, throughout his public career, Reagan balanced his policy aims and his electoral ambitions. But contrary to Reeves, Reagan had signaled a crucial shift—from an emphasis on confrontation to a willingness to negotiate—as early as January 1984, when in a speech on Soviet-American relations televised live to Europe, he spoke sentimentally of two mythical couples, the Americans Jim and Sally and their Soviet counterparts Ivan and Anya, who, if thrown together by chance, would quickly discover their shared humanity.

Reagan's pivot resulted not from electoral calculation, but from his concern over the possibility of accidental nuclear war and, more importantly, his optimistic assessment that the time had come to execute the plan he had articulated from the outset of his presidency—to negotiate with the Soviets from a reestablished position of military strength. Reagan simply did what he had consistently told everyone he intended to do. In the end, his deft, determined use of power, combined with his willingness to negotiate shrewdly and forcefully, proved decisive.

The United States and the West won the Cold War. The Soviet Union lost, and its political system expired. Reeves, however, is ambivalent about how much credit is due Reagan, and in the end gives him too little. Margaret Thatcher's oft-quoted tribute—that Reagan won the Cold War without firing a shot—is admittedly too pat. Gorbachev, for one, deserves much credit for letting the Soviet imperium slip away peacefully. For that great deed he is worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to him in 1990. But we should never forget that Gorbachev's reforms were designed to save Soviet Communism and its empire, not hasten their demise.

The Cold War ended on American terms, according to a script written in Washington, not Moscow. Back in 1978, Ronald Reagan—then a private citizen well past retirement age, with political ambitions but less than shining electoral prospects—had lightheartedly informed his foreign policy advisor Richard Allen that he had a simple idea for U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union: "It is this: we win and they lose. What do you think of that?" To the surprise of experts and ordinary people around the world, and to Richard Reeves's lingering disbelief, Reagan made it happen.

Robert Collins is Middlebush Professor of History at the University of Missouri–Columbia. In December, Columbia University Press will publish his book Transforming America: Politics and Culture in the Reagan Years. *He is the author of* More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America *(Oxford University Press).*

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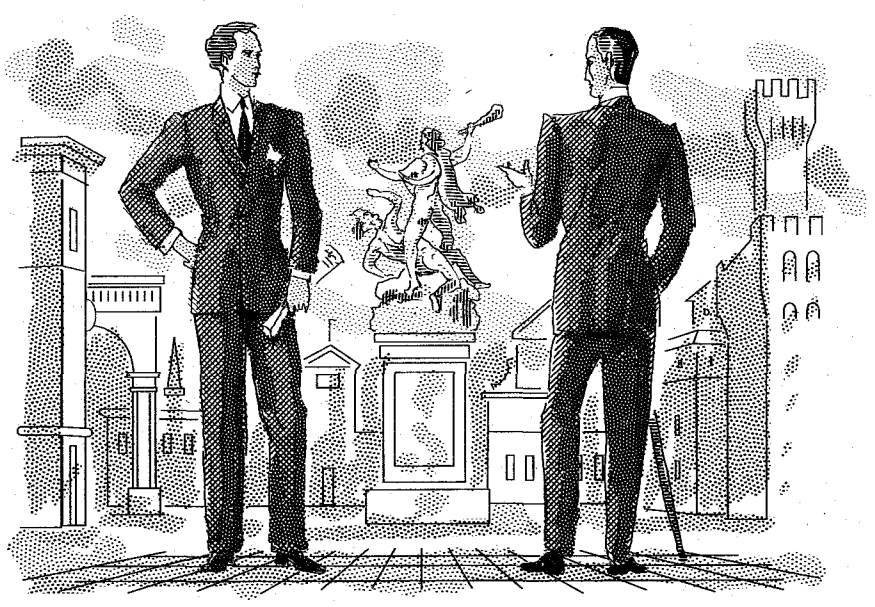
Book Review by Justin Shubow

The Prince and the Dandy

The Suit: A Machiavellian Approach to Men's Style,
by Nicholas Antongiavanni. Collins, 240 pages, $18.95

Bewildered and intimidated out of ignorance, or perhaps dismissing the subject as effeminate, few American men are willing to give much thought to their attire. The result? All too often, no matter who wears the pants in a relationship, it is the woman who chooses the trousers. To help fix this deplorable situation, *The Suit* aims to provide the right kind of man with the knowledge and confidence to dress himself sharply.

Written by Nicholas Antongiavanni—the *nom de plumage* of a former speechwriter for George W. Bush, Condoleezza Rice, and Rudolph Giuliani—the book is a close imitation of Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* in both structure and style. Whereas Machiavelli penned his notorious handbook in the hopes of becoming an advisor to Lorenzo de' Medici, Antongiavanni writes to offer his sartorial expertise to John Elkann, heir apparent to the Fiat dynasty and grandson of the Italian merchant prince Gianni Agnelli. Elkann has quite a legacy to uphold, since Agnelli was a famous coxcomb known for wearing his watch over his shirt cuff and pairing suits with (casual) button-down collar shirts—with the collar points unbuttoned, no less.



Just as Machiavelli boldly set forth the qualities a prince needed to obtain and maintain power, Antongiavanni recommends "dandification" as the *virtù* required at the highest reaches of business and politics, where it is survival of the best fitted. To those who would rule in these competitive worlds, Antongiavanni's first and foremost counsel is to don a suit and tie, the timeless combination that reached its apogee in the 1930s. A triumph of design that harmoniously balances modesty and sexuality, conformity and individuality, simplicity in the whole with ornament in the details, the business suit is the perfect uniform for those who see their work as civilized combat. Indeed, long before anyone spoke of the "power suit," bankers and lawyers on the streets of London could be seen going about like knights ready for battle, outfitted with armor (three-piece suit), helmet (bowler hat), sword (umbrella, never unfurled), and shield (copy of the *Times*). With this in mind, one should notice that the chief effect of business casual has been to strip men of the most aggressively masculine item in the Western wardrobe: the necktie.

Antongiavanni's thorough advice, which includes specific recommendations for various body types, is largely spot on as a guide to looking like a captain, and not an ensign, of industry—at least for the pre-dot-com era. Ever the realist, his discerning judgments rise above partisan politics: George H. W. Bush was "ruined" by having dressed too preppily patrician in the White House, whereas Willie Brown, the former Democratic mayor of San Francisco, won "glory" with his double-breasted panache.

The Suit pays considerable attention to bespoke tailoring, which it esteems far above the less expensive options of made-to-measure (which merely alters pre-existing patterns) and ready-to-wear. Not only does a pilgrimage to Savile Row or its Neapolitan counterpart permit the greatest personalization and hence the best possible fit, it affords the pleasures of patronizing highly skilled Old World artisans, complete with their antiquated diction ("linen" for shirt cuff, "scye" for armhole) and formality ("Sir, would you kindly step through?"). It is curious that although custom tailoring would appear to permit the greatest individuality and risk-taking—to the point of outlandishness—it has in fact been a bulwark of sartorial conservatism. Though this can be attributed partly to self-selection by the clientele, one must not forget the salutary role of the dutiful tailor, who politely but firmly steers customers away from any gaucheries.

That Antongiavanni is a clothes-horse himself, the sort of man who can get a contact high from caressing a yard of vicuña, helps to explain the most distinctive and daring aspect of his book: holding up the dandy as its ideal. In fact, it was originally titled *The Dandy*, but the publisher thought better of it. Not only has that word been tainted in America ever since the first taunt of "Yankee Doodle," but in the minds of most people the dandy is an aristocratic figure, an idle, frivolous aesthete who lords his exquisite taste over others. Ostentation might be acceptable for singular figures in solitary pursuits—think, for instance, of writers, such as Max Beerbohm and Tom Wolfe, who have been dandies in person and in print ("prose-horses" one might call them). But as Benjamin Franklin could have advised, men of enterprise need to project an image of thrift, industry, and self-restraint. The author is aware, of course, that many of the great historical dandies, Beau Brummell included, ended up disgraced, dissolute, and exiled due to unpaid debts. Sobriety was never their strong suit. In the face of all of this, Antongiavanni does his best to rehabilitate both the word and the ideal: "[T]he dandy is the enemy of the splendiferous and effeminate. He…favors simple clothes, pristine in cut, immaculate in fit,… never ostentatious, always manly…."

While the conceit of this book is a clever one, it perhaps goes too far in treating its original not just as a source of inspiration but as a pattern book. Hewing closely to Harvey C. Mansfield's translation of *The Prince*, *The Suit* imitates many of Machiavelli's puzzling stylistic idiosyncrasies, including his brazen grammatical transgressions. Antongiavanni is to be commended for defending classic men's wear against the whims of fashion and the ravages of business casual, but his book in praise of elegance might have achieved even greater refinement had its prose been bespoke rather than made-to-measure.

Justin Shubow is a student at Yale Law School.

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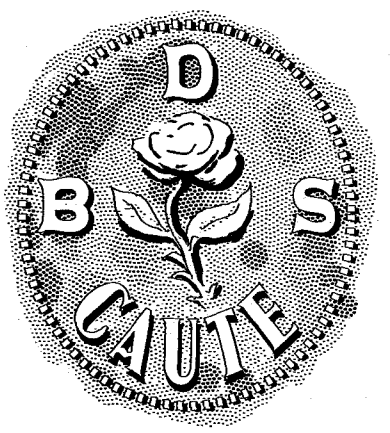
Book Review by Benjamin Balint

Spinning Spinoza

Betraying Spinoza: The Renegade Jew Who Gave Us Modernity, by Rebecca Goldstein. Schocken, 304 pages, $19.95



Design of Spinoza's signet ring (enlarged). His initials, BDS (Benedict de Spinoza), appear above a rose and the latin word *caute* (caution). In Portuguese, *espinhosa* means "from a thorny place," an illusion to the rose, which is also a heraldic symbol of discretion.

In the summer of 1656, the Amsterdam Jewish community took the extraordinary step of excommunicating a young man, then 23 years old, whose parents were refugees driven from Portugal by the Inquisition. He stood accused of "abominable heresies" and "monstrous deeds." Accordingly, it was decreed that he be "banned, cut off, cursed, and anathematized."

Baruch Spinoza neither protested the edict nor tried to reverse it. Unbowed, he abjured both the God of Israel and the people of Israel, and replaced his old religion with an audacious faith in the supreme power of human reason. In the two decades remaining to him, Spinoza lifted himself, as Goethe said, "to the summits of thought." Somehow, this ex-Orthodox Jew in Calvinist Holland—schooled in Hebrew (he composed a Hebrew grammar), speaking Portuguese, and writing in Latin—fashioned himself into one of the most radical philosophers who ever lived.

Three hundred and fifty years later, Rebecca Goldstein, a novelist and visiting professor of philosophy at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, tries in her new book, *Betraying Spinoza*, to bring the heretic back into the fold. She is not the first to make the attempt. The Israeli statesman David Ben-Gurion, for instance, proposed that the 300th anniversary of the ban serve as the occasion for an official revocation. But the latest shot at reclaiming Spinoza as a Jewish thinker reveals less about Spinoza than about the fascinating ways he has been imagined.

Spinoza's radicalism begins in his critique of religion. In the anonymously published *Theological-Political Treatise*, he insists on the distinction between philosophy, which aims at truth, and theology, which aims, he says, at obedience. He revolts against revelation as a source of truth, and rejects fundamental doctrines like divine providence, free will, reward and punishment, election, the possibility of miracles, and the immortality of the soul. Although Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, had already taken a swipe at the Mosaic authorship of the "Five Books of Moses," Spinoza more or less fathers biblical criticism by rejecting the Bible's divine authorship. Though he stops well short of endorsing a religion-free polity, and though he cautions against expressing such an opinion to the masses, Spinoza deems adherents to organized religion slavish and superstitious. He articulates a radical determinism that banishes purpose and contingency and chance, and allows into the world no arbitrary or spontaneous events. (It is in this sense that Einstein said, "I believe in Spinoza's God.") He also famously posits a God who is identical with the totality of nature. This God-or-Nature, this infinite substance outside of which nothing exists, is eternal, necessary, self-caused, self-sufficient, perfect, and perfectly indifferent to us.

Yet Spinoza's particular genius consists in bringing not only God, but also man, under the universal rule of nature. He does this in his masterpiece, the posthumously published *Ethics*. A strange thicket of definitions, axioms, postulates, demonstrations, corollaries, and scholia, the *Ethics* deploys what Spinoza called a "geometrical order" (inspired by Euclid and Descartes) to treat human desires and emotions "in exactly the same manner as though I were concerned with lines, planes, and solids." Considered in this impersonal light, man's highest good, accessible only to an elite few, is shown to be the knowledge of God, which itself yields to an exalted, unrequited love—*amor dei intellectualis*.

Finally, if Spinoza's radicalism naturalizes God and man, it also secularizes politics. The *Treatise* is the first and perhaps the most eloquent defense of toleration and liberal democracy—and the freedom of thought and speech it secures—in the history of political philosophy. In a sense, Spinoza founded liberal democracy.

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DESPITE THE SYSTEMATIC LUCIDITY OF Spinoza's thought, it has proved amazingly fertile in its interpretive possibilities. The reception of Spinoza's thought, in other words, is as full of wonders as the thought itself.

Spinoza has been read as a kind of patron saint of freethinkers and atheists, but also—because he saw God as the immanent cause of all things—as the "God-intoxicated man" of the German Romantics. He has been variously portrayed as the last of the medievals and the prophet of modernity; metaphysician and mystic; grim determinist and champion of human freedom; social contract theorist and Machiavellian. Grateful for his attacks on religion, libertines loved him early on; but his *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* encouraged Schopenhauer to regard him as a model of ascetic renunciation. Nietzsche read him and exclaimed, "I have a forerunner, and what a forerunner!"

Indeed, by stressing one dimension or singling out another, many readers have claimed Spinoza's views as an anticipation of their own, in effect imagining him in their own image. Friedrich Engels saw in Spinoza "the splendid representative of dialectics," and the Marxist thinker Louis Althusser labelled Spinoza "the only direct ancestor of Marx." Others, citing his influence on Thomas Jefferson by way of Locke, have called him a "proto-American." The neurologist Antonio Damasio suggests he was a "proto-biologist." Spinoza's pantheism, meanwhile, inspires so-called deep ecologists like Arne Naess to laud his "proto-ecologism." For Woody Allen, the pantheism suggests rather a proto-dieter: "Spinoza...dined sparingly because he believed that God existed in everything, and it's intimidating to wolf down a knish if you think you're ladling mustard onto the First Cause of All Things."

The Jewish reception of Spinoza, meanwhile, has proved no less storied. Leo Strauss offers one example in his Preface to *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, showing how German Jews looked to Spinoza, who pointed the way out of the ghetto, as the symbol of their emancipation. Later, on the basis of a passage in which Spinoza entertains the possibility that the Jews might one day "raise up their state afresh," it was the Zionists who adopted him as a precursor. They sensed a similarity between Spinoza's secularization of history and their own impatience with the traditional Jewish expectation that a homeland would be restored only with providential or messianic aid. (One such reader, the early Zionist Moses Hess, went so far as to acclaim him as a Jewish nationalist who successfully combined philosophical rigor with a love for the Jewish people.) Finally, because he left the synagogue without entering the church, Spinoza has been understood—especially in Israel, where he is very avidly studied—as the first secular Jew.

Betraying Spinoza is best understood as the latest installment in this last tradition. Goldstein aims "to recapture the sense of the man behind the formidable system, locate the pounding pulse of subjectivity within the crystalline structure of radical objectivity." The result is more "a novelist's attempt to imagine her way into another's life," as the author puts it, than a philosopher's endeavor to come to grips with someone's reasoning.

Goldstein opens the book with a long description of how—as a student in an all-girls yeshiva, long before liberating herself from the Orthodoxy of her youth and beginning a career in philosophy—she first encountered Spinoza. So it comes as little surprise that the Spinoza she discovers is himself an ex-yeshiva student driven by a deep, if unacknowledged, wrestling with an identity he never managed to overcome. Goldstein argues that beneath what she calls Spinoza's "impersonal grandeur" lies "a Jewish sensibility," and even an "emotional affinity with the narrative of Jewish history." "Spinoza's brave new revisioning of the world was an answer to the centuries of Jewish suffering," she concludes. "And if this is so, then Spinoza is something of a Jewish thinker after all. He is, paradoxically, Jewish at the core."

Here, too, Goldstein is not the first to make the point. To take one example, in 1929, Leon Roth, the first professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, wrote: "In spite of himself, and in spite of the Amsterdam community, [Spinoza] remained in his innermost being a son of the People of the Book." But whereas Roth came to this conclusion from a consideration of Spinoza's ideas on philosophy as a practical art of living, Goldstein arrives there on the basis of his universalism, noting that "for him salvation rests in the dissolution of one's personal identity, in a merging into the whole."

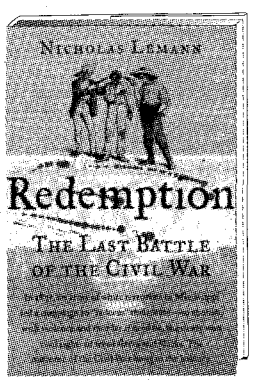
THE CRITIC HAROLD BLOOM, FOR ONE, has already criticized Goldstein in his review for "desperately arguing" that Spinoza's "detachment and loftiness were defenses against the sufferings of Jewish history" ("The Heretic Jew," *New York Times Book Review*, June 18). Yet we might go a step further by taking up Goldstein's invitation to read her as she reads Spinoza. In short, what deep need brings Goldstein to strain toward such a view? What compels her to betray Spinoza in just this way?

After all, the impulse to read Spinoza as a Jewish thinker derives not merely from the kind of Jewish pride that commonly claims Freud, or Einstein. Nor does it stem from the obverse of that generosity Heinrich Heine remarked upon when he said, "[T]he gentiles were generous enough to grant [Spinoza] the title of Jew, of which the Jews had deprived him." Nor does Goldstein's denial that Spinoza had simply been motivated by reason—by what he calls the peculiarly binding character of the known—follow merely from her indulging the temptation to reduce philosophy to autobiography.

Goldstein's interpretive gesture originates, rather, in the old desire to see Spinoza as a precursor. This time, however, the ties between past and present are less ideological than psychological. This time, Spinoza is made to appear as the first American Jew: a Jew free of Jewish commitments and attachments, a successful immigrant fulfilling the promise of America—the very sort of liberal democracy Spinoza defends. In other words, the gesture is born of the American Jewish desire to be guiltlessly universal, to lose the trappings of Judaism in a way that America uniquely allows and yet still be somehow "Jewish at the core." Emphasizing the way Spinoza moved into the previously impossible space that was neither Jewish nor Christian, Goldstein celebrates him, actually, as the first Jew to transcend his tradition, and by transcending it to embody it.

Benjamin Balint is a writer living in Jerusalem.

"Essential,"[1] "engrossing,"[2] and "gripping."[3]



REDEMPTION
The Last Battle of the Civil War
Nicholas Lemann

In 1875, an army of white terrorists in Mississippi led a campaign to "redeem" their state—to abolish, with violence and murder if need be, the newly won civil rights of freed slaves and blacks. The outcome of the Civil War hung in the balance.

"One of the very best accounts of Reconstruction I've ever read."
—David Brion Davis, Yale University

"As brilliantly written as the white South's bloody reversal of the Civil War's verdict was grimly effective."
—Hodding Carter III

[1]Roger Wilkins, George Mason University
[2]*Publishers Weekly*
[3]Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard University

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Book Review by Robert Royal

What Hath God Wrought?

The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success, by Rodney Stark.
Random House, 304 pages, $25.95 (cloth), $15.95 (paper)

In The Rise of Christianity (1997), Rodney Stark, a professor of social science at Baylor University, argued persuasively that Christianity grew so explosively in the classical world because it brought superior benefits to rich and poor, men and women, slave and free, the young, old, and infirm. The ancient pagan physician Galen marveled, for example, that Christianity helped ordinary people attain virtues that only the rarest of philosophers achieved; the rabidly anti-Christian Emperor Julian lamented that Christian charity put pagan efforts to shame. Stark's book, published ten years ago, did not let us forget such witnesses.

His latest book, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success*, continues along the same path, though with less persuasiveness. For all its contributions to the modern West, it would be difficult to say that Christianity "led to" the nice things with which Stark would like to credit it. Large historical currents just do not fit such neat conceptualizations. Yet despite his overambitious goals, he does manage to clear away a lot of historical junk. Two main prejudices—one stemming from the Reformation, the other from the Enlightenment—have distorted our view of the religious past. The Reformers, understandably, labored to portray Catholicism as both spiritually and materially benighted, and therefore tended to dismiss virtually the whole religious history of the West until the 16th century. Many of the Enlightenment figures in the 18th century were happy to join them, and to toss the additional 200 years of both Catholicism and Protestantism onto the same ash heap.

But we know a lot more about Western history today. Stark makes quick work, for example, of the old and still influential theory of the German sociologist Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5), who argued that the Reformation, particularly Calvinism, had generated the spirit of hard work, "this-worldly asceticism," orderliness, punctuality, reliability, rationality, and entrepreneurship that led to Western prosperity. So strong is Weber's influence that the anti-West crowd in the developed and developing nations often condemns Christianity for inspiring Western economic and political imperialism.

Influential sociology can still be bad sociology, however. Henri Pirenne had already observed in the 1920s that "all of the essential features of capitalism—individual enterprise, advances in credit, commercial profits, speculation, etc.—are to be found from the twelfth century on, in the city republics of Italy—Venice, Genoa, or Florence." These were not the successes of mere handicraft workers and spice traders, either. Hugh Trevor-Roper and many others have traced "large-scale industrial capitalism" back to its roots in the extensive networks of monasteries flourishing in the "Dark Ages," when the local monks preserved classical learning, reclaimed lands that had gone back to their wild state after the fall of Rome, and developed new techniques to make their lives and the lives of local villagers less burdensome, thereby freeing themselves up for contemplation. People in English- and German-speaking countries were willing to lend Weber an ear, however, because the center of European economic activity did shift north and west with the opening of the trade routes to the Orient around Africa, and the discovery of the New World. Fernand Braudel sums this up: "The northern countries took over the place that earlier had so long and brilliantly been occupied by the old capitalist centers of the Mediterranean. They invented nothing, either in technology or business management."

The Enlightenment charge that Christianity is irrational superstition fares hardly better. Stark claims that Christianity's influence on the West took two particular forms. First, Christianity—though ultimately rooted in the unfathomable mystery of God and the equally mysterious presence of God in Jesus—is primarily a religion of reason and logic, not of intuition and mystery. In this perspective, Christianity did what ancient religions did not, placing the *logos*, the creative word or reason, which it equated with Jesus, at the very heart of things. As St. John famously put it at the very beginning of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word [*logos*] and the Word was with God and the Word was God." John was using a Greek term here that means both word and reason. But Stark believes that Greek philosophy had little influence on Greek religion and that Christianity, by contrast, showed natural affinities for rational thinking.

Obviously, this is already a large claim that invites a multitude of questions and qualifications. Stark does not, however, leave things there. His second main contention is that the discipline of theology that arose among the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church demonstrates a belief in the possibility of progress in the knowledge of God, even though God is finally beyond our grasp. He contrasts this, in sweeping and unswerving generalization, with—basically—everything else:

> assumptions concerning the fundamental inexplicability of the gods and the intellectual superiority of introspection dominated all of the other major world religions. But from the early days, the church fathers taught that reason was the supreme gift from God and the means to *progressively increase* their understanding of scripture and revelation. Consequently, Christianity was *oriented to the future*, while the other major religions asserted the superiority of the past.

This is a deliberate challenge to the usual historiography that sees rationality and progress as the result of the *abandonment* of Christian thought. Stark's judgment of that Enlightenment self-evaluation is equally sweeping: "Nonsense. The success of the West, including the rise of science, rested entirely on religious foundations, and the people who brought it about were devout Christians."

The "entirely" in this last sentence is just one of many generalizations that will give pause even to someone who sympathizes with Stark's overall effort. Somehow Stark believes that the Christian embrace of reason and progress—about which he is right, up to a point—also led to technology, more rational institutions, personal freedom, and capitalism. "These were the victories by which the West won." But there is a lot of blue sky between the basic principles and their real-world applications, and a fair reading of his own evidence, quite eye-opening at many points, does not lead to as clear a conclusion as he tries to draw.

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Stark argues that Jews and Muslims primarily believe in revelation as a divine law to be applied. Christians, by contrast, he thinks of as living in a world to be progressively discovered and more accurately understood. In Augustine and the great medieval scientists, philosophers, and theologians, the gift of reason and its fruits are highly valued, so much so that, far from being irrational, the medieval Christian thinkers were quite prepared to use more reason than most of the world can easily bear. And this made the emergence of modern science, despite its conflicts with theologians, more natural in the West than the standard textbooks allow. Indeed, the old "war between religion and science" is not much supported by recent scholarship in the history of science. And every credible modern history of technology has uncovered how much of what we think of as Western innovation began in the so-called Dark Ages.

Just a quick inventory of some of these advances is astonishing. Ninth-century Paris already had water-powered mills; England, in 1086, according to the *Domesday Book*, boasted 5,624 of them. Belgium and Holland could reclaim lands from the sea because windmills had constantly pumped out water for centuries, beginning in the Dark Ages. Standard textbooks are usually reliable about the improved horse collar, the three-field system, and other anonymous inventions that made a great difference to the West's advances. They much more rarely note the monasteries' fish farming (the major source of fish in Europe), agricultural diversification, and mechanical inventions. (Some ecologists, like the historian Lynn White, Jr., however, have discovered these facts only to deplore the Christian contributions to environmental problems.)

We tend to think of a monastery as a simple series of monk's cells. The English historian Christopher Dawson has pointed out that as early as 820 a large monastery such as St. Gallen in Switzerland was "a vast complex of buildings, churches, workshops, store-houses, offices, schools, and alms-houses, housing a whole population of dependents, workers, and servants like the temple cities of antiquity." Such establishments obviously had vast effects on the surrounding countryside as well. Of course, merchant ships, war, and the weapons of war were to give the West still other advantages, as did that peculiar medieval Christian invention, the university. In the Age of Discovery, Stark points out, only the West had eyeglasses and mechanical clocks. All this, he rightly says, was overlooked in the overblown Renaissance and Enlightenment notions about the "rebirth" of antiquity—which had never exhibited such progress in science or technology.

Furthermore, by the ninth century, the monks had developed many of the institutions needed for an international "capitalism," not merely the productive capacities but the managerial and financial instruments as well. By the High Middles Ages, for example, the Knights Templars served as a kind of American Express bank by issuing letters of credit that could be redeemed in, say, the Holy Land, so that pilgrims and other travelers did not need to run the risk of carrying money that could be stolen en route. The Templars had a high reputation for honesty, which made the system run smoothly. The larger monastic system of trade was refined and developed further by the great banking houses that grew up alongside commerce in Venice, Florence, and Genoa. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that the banks were themselves involved in various industries and served a dual function, facilitating both the transfer of goods and the transfer of money across political jurisdictions.

The problem with all this, however, is that Christendom is not the same as Christianity. Historical and economic forces at work in the former are not always and simply consequences of the latter. Stark makes it clear, for example, that the West benefited from the fall of Rome—which opened up spaces for small jurisdictions to operate with a certain degree of autonomy. But why did these developments not lead to the perpetual and self-destructive rivalries that had existed among city-states in ancient Greece? And what about those international networks of monasteries that managed and administered trade and finance? Stark points out the many interest groups involved in these networks, which played off one another and made liberty possible despite state pretensions. But what does this have to do with the religious basis of society?

And what of the parts of Europe that did not enjoy these advantages? Spain has long been the prime example of the wrong-headedness of a politicized Catholicism. All the silver and other wealth of the New World could not raise it up. Stark claims that Spanish Catholicism did not choke off development in Spain because Spain never rose in the first place. But this contradicts his thesis that Christianity is *the* source of rationality and progress. You may argue, as he does, that state tyranny in Spain and elsewhere retarded or blocked the Christian world view's basic dynamism. This is to admit, however, that there are many factors that can deflect a metaphysical orientation and, therefore, determine how or whether Christianity will produce its proper social effects.

Indeed, the shift in the center of European economy from the great central Italian cities to the Netherlands and Britain, though not the result of Protestantism, reflects how much depended on wholly non-religious factors. Global exploration, for example, spelled the beginning of the end for the vast empires of Venice, Florence, and Genoa as trade shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Though Stark invokes "tyrants" as partly the reason for Italy's decline, there are geographic factors involved as well, and it would seem odd to blame geography for the failures of Christian impulses towards freedom.

Rodney Stark's case, then, is a mixed one. As in several previous books, he uncovers many positive contributions of Christianity, both in its pre-Reformation and post-Reformation forms, to the civilization of the West. This is no small achievement, particularly when we are embroiled in a bitter debate about what the West is, where it is headed, and on what basis we shall proceed. But though he persuasively defends the free societies and economies that are permeated by the specific view of God, man, and the world stemming from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, he tries to make the religious tradition carry too much weight here. He deftly corrects one historical injustice, but at the risk of contributing to another.

Robert Royal is president of the Faith & Reason Institute in Washington, D.C. His latest book is The God That Did Not Fail: How Religion Built and Sustains the West *(Encounter).*

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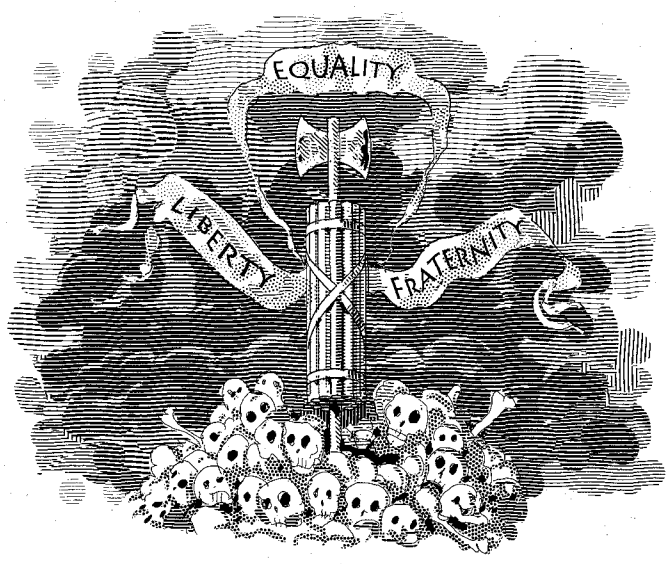
Book Review by Katherine Auspitz

If Men Were Angels

Earthly Powers: The Clash of Religion and Politics in Europe, from the French Revolution to the Great War,
by Michael Burleigh. HarperCollins, 544 pages, $29.95



Eve aima le fruit nouveau
C'est la faute de Rousseau
Cain tua son frère
C'est la faute de Voltaire.

Eve ate the apple,
Rousseau was to blame,
Cain killed his brother,
Voltaire's is the shame.

—Béranger

With earthly powers, Michael Burleigh has written a serious, ambitious survey of the complex ways religion and politics interacted in Europe from the French Revolution to the Great War. He wants to remind readers of Christianity's profound influence on the West and to demonstrate that the ideals of the Enlightenment were imperfectly realized by regimes that invoked them. Aghast at the modern record of human cruelty, the British historian thinks religious beliefs and practices make people kinder and less bloody-minded. Of course, religious convictions can and do inform civic conduct, often to noble purpose, but churches themselves are earthly powers, too, supported, organized, and administered by earthly creatures. Burleigh is free to prefer persons who claim supernatural justifications, but he does not demonstrate that they behave better than those who do not.

Throughout the book, he indulges his disdain for the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. By beginning in 1789, Burleigh conveniently omits Henry VIII, Thomas and Oliver Cromwell, and Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot. Thus, for example, he condemns the French seizure of Church lands without considering whether this redistribution—which in England arguably favored a market economy and representative government—had the same effect in France. And if not, why not?

In discussing the Revolution, he grievously slights Alexis de Tocqueville, mentioning him only to evoke al-Qaeda. In a chapter in *The Old Regime and the Revolution* on the universal rights of man, Tocqueville does, in passing, compare the revolutionary armies with the Islamic armies, but a few pages earlier, he had written that the memory of the Revolution will forever trouble the sleep of tyrants. Burleigh says nothing of Tocqueville's belief that liberty delivers individuals from moral isolation and teaches them to regard others as familiars, as *semblables*. Nor does he report Tocqueville's conviction, based on his American travels, that religion flourishes when freed from state sponsorship.

Burleigh recounts the struggles and accommodations of the papacy with Napoleon and successive French governments, as well as with the *Risorgimento* whose importunities pain him, and with the countries that would become, in 1914, the Central Powers. He does not conceal or question the Vatican's willingness to produce an Imperial Catechism and several subsequent catechisms enjoining submission to the prevailing regime. He reports the dismay with which some of the faithful met the Syllabus of Errors and the proclamation of infallibility, but he never criticizes any pope as he does secular leaders. And so, in his account of the Dreyfus case, Leo XIII had "reservations" about the officer's guilt which led him to tell *Le Figaro*, "Happy the victim whom God recognizes as just enough to join with His own Son in sacrifice." Kindly meant, no doubt, but little comfort to a Jew on Devil's Island. Burleigh insists that whatever the virulently anti-Semitic Assumptionists had to say, "it was not said with the pope's approval." But would clerics in holy orders have acted with his disapproval?

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Burleigh is better on Britain and Germany. He sees that England had an established church but de facto religious pluralism, in keeping with competing reforms offered by Tories and Whigs. The Methodist Revival prevented revolution by promising joy in the next world to the poor, as well as by teaching them to address public meetings, form national organizations, and become the Labour Party at prayer. No religion in Britain could plausibly claim a monopoly on truth or charity, inasmuch as countless voluntary associations undertook good works.

He also understands judiciously the peril of *Gott mit uns* nationalism. "The authorities of Imperial Germany were not the Gestapo," he acknowledges. But unlike England's cleavages, Germany's divisions did not serve it well. The "marriage of iron and rye" between industrial and rural elites prevented competition for working class allies. Protestants and Catholics, let alone Jews and secular socialists, were in many ways alien to each other. Burleigh recounts that when the *Kulturkampf* abated, the Center Party—the Catholic party in the Reichstag—"voted for the extension of the defense budget," but he does not explain the significance. Bismarck wanted to dispense with a yearly vote on military appropriations, and the Catholics supported him. They could not or would not make common cause with liberals and socialists to constrain the executive through the power of the purse. Of course, virtually all parties sought boons from the Chancellor rather than coalitions in the Reichstag, but Burleigh finds no ominous signs here. Yet in March 1933, the Center Party voted en bloc for the Enabling Act, allowing Hitler to rule by decree. In neither case could Catholics alone have thwarted the Chancellor, but Burleigh's overall argument for the unqualified superiority of Christian over civic virtue again fails to persuade.

His moral imagination is too limited. Burleigh respects secular ethics in England and Germany, but not in France. He recognizes that many Victorians felt a sense of duty distinct from religion. He honors the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie's Kantian scruples and even the "high moral purpose" of German socialists. But he has nothing but contempt for French republicans' *pur et dur* stoicism or for French socialists, like Jean Jaurès, who saw the rights of man as not diversionary but essential to their purpose. Burleigh judges the French separation of church and state in 1905 to be wholly amoral, writing that "the new law denied that the state existed for other than material goods." Yet this is simply untrue, as even contemporary Catholics attested. For Charles Péguy, a Catholic *dreyfusard*, Christianity venerated saints, and republicanism honored heroes, but both traditions could inspire self-sacrifice and love of others.

The Russian sections of the book are its weakest. Burleigh relies heavily on Dostoyevsky rather than on social or economic evidence. Moreover, he finds it "breathtaking" that Alexander II abolished serfdom in 1861—as if poverty or servility could be eliminated by fiat. He contrasts the Tsar's action favorably with efforts in America, where "slavery, and then racial segregation, lingered...into the 1960s." He is unaware that a French radical from the Vendée predicted Reconstruction would fail. Georges Clemenceau, in exile in the United States during the Second Empire, reported to incredulous French readers that "all land has been left in the hands of the former rebels."

Curiously, too, despite his preference for piety, Burleigh seems uninterested in examinations of religious experience. He dismisses *The Protestant Ethic* as "self-congratulation," although Max Weber was genuinely curious about ways in which religion shaped conduct—in this case, why belief in predestination encouraged effort, not passivity. And from Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, a remarkable effort to ground logical and moral categories in shared social experience, Burleigh plucks one word, "effervescence," "out of which Fascism and Nazism would flow." He does not see the essential Burkeanism in Durkheim's idea of a polity where common beliefs are "the result of an immense cooperation" through time and space, in which "a multitude of minds have associated."

Ending with 1914, Burleigh utters portentous warnings about "political religion" and the slippery slope from the Jacobins to Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism, which he promises to take up in a second volume. In it, one hopes, the author will not overlook the means through which Hitler and Stalin seized and consolidated power. Germany did not succumb to Hitler from an excess of *Aufklärung*. Nor is Stalin best understood as a zealot for human perfectibility. The Bolsheviks inherited a vast oppressive apparatus from the Tsars whom Burleigh admires, and the Nazis rose through a series of political deals, including accommodations with Catholics. To ignore such continuities would be bad history.

However well-intentioned, Michael Burleigh fails to see that democratic politics is based in large measure on citizens' shared principles and memories, which they may interpret differently but which are accessible to all. People may hold religious traditions in common as part of this, but democracies cannot defer to revelation, nor does Burleigh provide any convincing reason that they should.

Katherine Auspitz is the author of The Radical Bourgeoisie: The Ligue de l'enseignement and the Origins of the Third Republic, 1866-1885 *(Cambridge University Press).*

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Book Review by Patrick J. Garrity

Americas' Game

Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero, by David Maraniss.
Simon & Schuster, 416 pages, $26

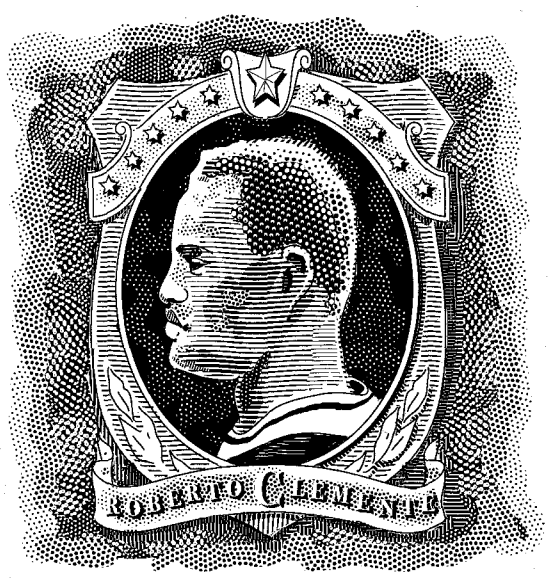
The appearance of the word "hero" in the title of a sports biography is cause for immediate suspicion. Athletes, of course, can be heroes in the classic sense. Ted Williams was a highly decorated combat pilot in World War II and the Korean War who, in his spare time, became a Hall of Fame baseball player. Jackie Robinson displayed a different, but nonetheless very real, courage and dignity. For the most part, however, sports bios are given to embarrassing hyperbole, to celebrating a pitcher's bloody sock as if it merited a Purple Heart.

This traditional athlete worship is not completely missing from *Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero*. David Maraniss says that when he was growing up, his favorite baseball player was Roberto Clemente, and the book reflects those treasured memories. But Maraniss means to write more than a fond reminiscence and his claims on behalf of Clemente invite more serious consideration. Maraniss is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the *Washington Post*, whose biography of Vince Lombardi is one of the best sports books ever written. Adopting the approach of social commentators like David Halberstam and Ken Burns, Maraniss looks to sports and sportsmen to understand certain characteristic American virtues and pathologies.

Clemente was a Puerto Rican native who played 18 years in right field for the Pittsburgh Pirates (1955-1972). He won four batting titles, a Most Valuable Player Award, and twelve Gold Gloves, awarded annually to the best defensive player at each position in each league. His last hit was number 3,000, a milestone reached by only 26 players in major league history.

Despite this impressive résumé, he is often overlooked in the standard rankings of the greatest players. Critics then and now point to his relatively low home run total (240) and on-base and slugging percentages (.359 and .475), and his relatively high number of outfield errors. Maraniss seeks to correct the record, especially for those too young to remember Clemente as a player. His prime exhibit of Clemente's professional virtue is the 1971 World Series, won in seven games by the underdog Pirates over defending champion Baltimore. Clemente received the MVP award for batting .414, memorable clutch hitting, furious baserunning, and spectacular defensive play.

The mavens of baseball's subculture of historians and statisticians have noted a number of errors of fact in Maraniss's narrative of Clemente's playing career. Their critique, aside from the usual nit-picking, is serious enough to caution one not to rely upon *Clemente* as an authoritative reference source for baseball during the 1950s and 1960s. But Maraniss's argument for "heroism" does not rest on statistics alone. "There was something about Clemente that surpassed statistics, then and always."



The Latinization of the American national pastime—and Clemente's critical role in bringing that about—is the major subtext of the book. By his outstanding accomplishments on the field, his generosity, and the force of his personality, Clemente became the patron saint of Spanish-speaking players in the major leagues. He was not the first Latin player in the majors, but he paved the way for the influx and acceptance of athletes from the Caribbean and South America, many of whom have now become American citizens. For that community he was, and continues to be, a Spanish-speaking Jackie Robinson.

But what does Maraniss think Clemente means, or should mean, to his fellow Latin players and to his fans of all colors and ethnicities? Throughout the book, he stresses Clemente's pride in his Puerto Rican heritage and portrays him as a man whose dignity came from a fierce attachment to that island's distinct culture, history, and tradition of racial integration—self-consciously different from the U.S. mainland's. Trying to help the reader understand that culture and its importance to Clemente, Maraniss quotes fondly the Puerto Rican poet Enrique Zorrilla:

> Foreigners: make space
> Because here, the Puerto Rican troubadour
> Will sing with noble valor
> Land, blood, name and race.

Land, blood, name, and race. Not exactly the American creed.

Unfortunately, Maraniss does not explore the implications of respecting Clemente (or anyone else) because of his strong assertions of racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. Clemente himself—a U.S. Marine Corps reservist—at least suggested other possible grounds of pride and self-respect. In some extemporaneous comments delivered in January 1972 to a banquet of fathers and sons in San Juan, he said, "I see myself sometimes wondering why some people still have to fight for their rights. As you people know, I have been fighting for my rights all my life. I believe every human being is equal. At the same time we have problems because we are a great nation.... I am from Puerto Rico, but I am also an American citizen.... I can tell you one thing, I won't trade this country for no one country. We, no matter what, we have the best country in the world and you can believe it."

But it turns out Maraniss is looking elsewhere for Clemente's heroism, anyway. Toward the end of his book, Maraniss defines a hero as "someone who gives his life in the service of others." Clemente seems to fit this definition because, besides his many large and small kindnesses to strangers and poor people of all colors, on New Year's Eve 1972, just a few months after his three-thousandth hit, he was killed in the crash of an airplane delivering aid to earthquake victims in a devastated Nicaragua. Was that heroism? Or a tragic accident? Maraniss doesn't bother asking, even as he never fully comes to terms with the important question that he does raise: what it is about his "passion and grace" that makes Clemente an *American* hero?

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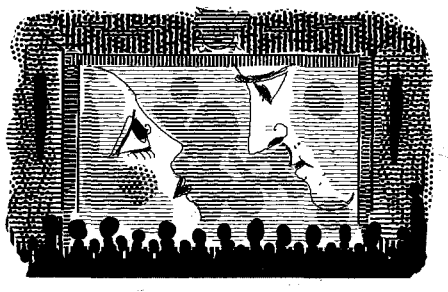
Column:

SHADOW PLAY

by Martha Bayles



Birth of a Blockbuster

The following is a transcription of the pitch session for Dan Brown's next novel, The Botticelli Botch. *Present are the author, his new agent Bizzy Boca, his new publisher Ernst Kluliss, and (getting in on the ground floor) the famous film producer Sam Schnellgeld.*

DAN (*arriving ten minutes late*): Sorry, guys. Crazy schedule. Can't wait to get back to New Hampshire and the writer's life. Bizzy, did you lay out my basic position? Royalties, rights, creative control, profit-sharing on the movie deal. I'd really rather not get ripped off this time.

SAM (*arriving two minutes later*): Well, hello dream team. Bizzy, that skirt is hot.

BIZZY: It's so exciting to have you here, Sam.

ERNST: Yes, and for a stodgy old bookbinder like me, it's exciting to do business with a real Hollywood mogul.

SAM: How about you, Danny? You excited?

DAN: Sure. But we need to close quickly. I have another appointment in an hour. Crazy schedule. Can't wait to get back to New Hampshire—

SAM: No biggie. I got lunch in twenty. So Bizzy, you wet dream, lay it on me. And please, no retread. *The Da Vinci Code* is a hard act to follow. Will this new one get all the religious nuts crawling out of the woodwork to do our marketing for us?

DAN: I'll make the pitch, if you don't mind. Bizzy's still learning the names. Sam, Ernst, *The Botticelli Botch* will not be a retread. For starters, the opening money shot will not be in Paris but in Florence. The Uffizi.

SAM: Uffizi, eh? Didn't know you were into automatic weapons. I confess, I did wonder why your wacko Opus Dei albino monk didn't shoot the curator with an Uzi. But here's some advice: if you're taking the Mafia route, use Russians. More sadistic, and no goddamn lobbyists. Does this one start with a murder, too?

DAN: No, a rape. Under Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus.*

ERNST: Splendid! And who will play the victim? How about Keira Knightley? She certainly has the face and figure to be a descendant of Mary Magdalene. And personally, I'd be very interested in meeting her.

BIZZY: Don't you just love the Mary Magdalene theme in *The Da Vinci Code*? The Holy Grail as her uterus, and Jesus as her stud muffin? I meant to tell you, Dan: I dreamed I was part of the bloodline, right down through the Merovingian dynasty. Talk about royalty!

DAN: Actually, I'm skipping that plot. Too much hate mail from narrow-minded Christians who won't even consider that Emperor Constantine might have cooked up the whole Jesus-divinity thing in order to stamp out goddess worship. Not to mention all those nit-picking Bible scholars. My facts all come from Henry Lincoln's *Holy Blood, Holy Grail,* I tell them, and if he were a charlatan, would the BBC have funded his programs?

BIZZY: Plus it's a *novel.* It's scary, isn't it, how some people can't distinguish between fact and fiction? *The Da Vinci Code* is a work of the human imagination!

ERNST: And a tribute to the human spirit, unfettered by the chains of religious dogma.

SAM: For marketing, you're probably right to sideline the Jesus stuff. I gotta hand it to Sony. It was brilliant to hire that Jesus-freak consultant—you know, that Jonathan Bock guy—to set up a "Da Vinci Dialogue" at the Sony Pictures website. Company-sponsored blogging catches the mall rats, so why not the Bible thumpers? The more they blog, the more they want to see the movie. It's amazing how your average mouth-breather will do anything to feel like he's part of the industry.

ERNST: Wish we could do that in publishing. But the masses want to be Dan Brown, not Ernst Kluliss. Ha-ha.

SAM: Trouble is, you can only milk that for so long, before some harpy like Barbara Nicolosi comes along and accuses you of turning people into "useful Christian idiots." Next time, I fear, it'll be *The Last Temptation of Christ* all over again—pickets, not tickets.

DAN: I beg you, don't mention that title. Some lunatic in Athens keeps emailing me about how that Greek writer, Katzi-somebody—

ERNST: Nikos Kazantzakis. He also wrote *Zorba the Greek* and an amazing, if interminable, re-creation of the *Odyssey.* A passionate, learned man who—

DAN: Right. So this lunatic keeps emailing me I should read *The Last Temptation of Christ,* because Katzi-what's-his-face deals with Jesus' humanity and the relationship with Mary Magdalene in "a really profound way." The implication being that I don't.

BIZZY: Oh, please. How many copies did it sell? Danny, I gotta ask you. You're not going to drop the Sacred Feminine riff, are you? Despite what you hear, Joe Six-Pack's not the one making movie choices these days.

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ERNST: My priority too, Dan. All those book clubs out there—overwhelmingly female. The books are mainly an excuse to swill wine and talk about their sex lives. But who cares? Book groups move product. Ha-ha.

BIZZY: Poor men! Sometimes I wonder what's left in the culture for them.

SAM: Sports, video games, online porn.

DAN: Now, Sam, you're making my pitch for me. *The Botticelli Botch* will unite the male and female demographic like no other book. Every writer has a secret, and mine is something I learned in prep school.

BIZZY: By the way, we don't advertise Dan's not-so-humble background. Not only did he go to Phillips Exeter, he also taught there for a few years.

DAN: Yeah, during my semi-failed literary career. But I did learn something from cramming literature down adolescent throats. Why do ordinary people buy novels? Out of mixed motives. On the one hand, they want a fast-paced story that will keep them turning pages and get their mind off their troubles.

ERNST: Sad but true. Which is why we publish Dean Koontz and Christine Feehan.

DAN: But people also aspire to higher things. Great books, great art—a lot of Americans crave to know more about them. But they also associate them with snobbery and pretentiousness, which they hate. So the road to riches is to satisfy the public's craving for high culture without setting off their anti-snobbery alarm.

ERNST: You mean, revive the middlebrow?

DAN: Oh, no. You can't go back to dumbing down high culture and spoon-feeding it to people. You gotta spike it, twist the meaning, hit 'em where they live. What do most readers learn from *The Da Vinci Code*?

SAM: That Jesus was Abraham and his seed are a bunch of French Frogs?

DAN: You assume they make that connection. They don't. Who reads Genesis these days? No, what people learn is what they *want* to learn: namely, that you can travel around Europe, visit all those museums, churches, and castles, and *understand it all without effort*. You don't need a Ph.D. or even a B.A. Western civilization is a riddle, and if you know the solution—which you can get from *one* book, *mine*—you're good to go.

ERNST: Brilliant! But please, make it *two* books. Tell us about *The Botticelli Bitch*.

DAN: That's *Botch*. Cue the Power Point, Bizzy. This time I'm not using a painting that's half flaked away. Compared with Leonardo's *The Last Supper*, Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* will knock your socks off. I'm jumping ahead, but imagine the camera panning down this babe as she covers her boobs with her right hand and pulls her hair over her privates with her left.

ERNST: Astonishing! I've seen the painting dozens of times, but it never occurred to me that she's being modest. How unlike Venus!

DAN: If you'll forgive me: "Our preconceived notions are so powerful that our mind blocks out the incongruity and overrides our eyes."

BIZZY: *The Da Vinci Code*, chapter 58, page 242.

SAM: Wow, chapter and verse. Where'd you get her, Danny?

DAN: Hands off, she's mine. Anyway, while the camera is eyeballing Venus, we hear the soundtrack of a terrible assault—male grunting and cursing, female screaming and crying. The war between the Roman Catholic Church and Sacred Womanhood is ratcheting to a new level, as the stunning and intelligent Dr. I. Connie Klast, professor of Feminist Art History at Georgetown University and world-famous expert on Botticelli, is being brutally raped by a priest.

ERNST: Splendid! Timely! The Church won't have a leg to stand on! What kind of priest, if I may ask? A Jesuit? It would be nice to avoid an embarrassing mistake, like having an Opus Dei monk, when there aren't any.

DAN: No problem. The assailant is a Dominican, from the secret Twenty-Ninth Province, known as the Manfriars. The Manfriars were founded in 1498, the year Pope Alexander VI had the excommunicated monk, Savonarola, burned and hanged.

SAM: Burned and hanged at the same time?

DAN: Yup, and in the same place, the Piazza della Signoria in Florence, where Savonarola staged his famous Bonfires of the Vanities, in which he burned all the luxury goods he could lay his hands on—including several "pagan" paintings by his loyal follower Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi, a.k.a. Botticelli.

SAM: I'm liking it. Whatever it costs, we'll shoot these scenes on location at the...Pizza della Whatever. But wait a minute. Who are the good guys? You're saying Botticelli was a follower of the creep who burned his pictures?

DAN: That's right. Savonarola was a magnetic figure. Look at this portrait of him by Fra Bartolommeo.

SAM: Wow, intense. Look at the schnozz! Maybe Tim Roth? Love the hood, by the way.

ERNST: *Monks From the Hood?* Ha-ha. But seriously, Dan, if I get your drift, you're making Savonarola and Botticelli the good guys. But who are the bad guys? The pope? That could work—dollar for dollar, your pope is your most reliable movie villain, next to your Nazi and your oil CEO. But how will you twist the meaning so it hits 'em where they live?

DAN: Cue the painting again, Bizzy. Check yourselves, guys. You're drooling, like me. None of us can take our eyes off that sexy Venus. The feminist art historians have got us pegged. What is the essence of art? *The male gaze*. Admiring, yes. But also lustful, possessive, controlling. For 2,500 years, depicting nude women (and in the case of queer artists like Michelangelo, nude men) has been a way of asserting power over them. My heroine, Connie, became interested in Botticelli for that reason. Her first book, *Beauty As Rape*, denounced Botticelli for reducing his model, the young Simonetta Cattaneo, to a passive object literally blown about by the winds. It's no accident that Simonetta was the mistress of Giuliano de' Medici, brother of Botticelli's patron, Lorenzo the Magnificent.

SAM: Hold on, my eyes are glazing over. I thought we were talking entertainment here.

DAN: Let me translate. Simonetta is the hottest babe in Tuscany, married at 15 to a dull dude named Marco Vespucci (whose only claim to fame is that they named America after his cousin, Amerigo). Every rich playboy in Florence wants Simonetta, but the one who gets her is Giuliano—brother of the city's godfather. Giuliano wins a big jousting tournament under a banner with her picture on it, painted by Botticelli. She becomes Giuliano's prize, but then dies a year later—never having really lived. All her life she's been a possession, an ornament, a trophy. Now look at the painting again. Not the naked flesh. The eyes. See how sad they are?

ERNST: That's why the painting is so lovely. There are many other portraits of Simonetta,

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but most have a vacant expression. Only Botticelli captured her soul.

DAN: It's not a question of soul. It's a question of gender politics. As Connie comes to realize, the sadness, the victimization, is the whole point. Botticelli wasn't just painting the objectified Venus, he was painting the Venus who resists being objectified. This work is *subversive*! Look at how awkwardly Venus is drawn—her left shoulder barely exists, and her left forearm is the size of her calf. An objective observer not blinded by reverence for Renaissance art might say that he botched it. And Connie is that observer. For reasons I will relate in a moment, she sees through all the lies about this being a great painting. In truth, it's a deliberate botch!

ERNST: Dan, you've done it again! I'm on the edge of my seat! *Why* did Botticelli botch it?

DAN: Because he *understood*. He, too, was in love with Simonetta. But as an employee of the Medici, he had to keep his distance. But distance reveals truth. Botticelli came to understand the patriarchal system—in essence, he became a radical feminist. Like Savonarola.

ERNST: *What?* Savonarola a radical feminist?

DAN: How do you know he wasn't? Or rather, what has conditioned you to think that he wasn't? What got burned on his Bonfire? Silk dresses, lacy lingerie, cosmetics, fancy wigs, corsets, paintings of nude women—all the trappings of female oppression! Why did Botticelli throw some of his own paintings onto the flames?

BIZZY: To liberate the women! To empower them!

DAN: Right! But then the Church cracked down, condemning Savonarola to a horrible death and forcing Botticelli to spend the rest of his life painting the Virgin Mary. This is where the Manfriars come in. Savonarola was a Dominican, but when he began to crusade for women's rights, the order got into trouble with the pope. They knew that if they didn't deal with Savonarola, the pope would shut them down. So they founded the Manfriars, a secret province devoted to the suppression of the Sacred Feminine. Their first act was to hand Savonarola over to be hanged and burned. Then they went after the artists, making sure they painted gorgeous, sexy nudes for powerful men to ogle. This was called the Renaissance, and we've all been brainwashed—even you, Ernst—into thinking it produced great art. In truth, it was a huge propaganda campaign on the part of the nobility and the Church to keep women in their place. And the deadliest weapon in this campaign was *beauty*. The *beauty* of helpless girls like Simonetta, turned against them as the instrument of their oppression.

BIZZY: Oh Dan, that's beautiful. Excuse me—I'm choking up.

ERNST: I'm beginning to see, Dan. A dramatic medieval tale, full of passion and blood, that also illustrates the very truth you revealed in the previous novel. I must say, I admire your integrity.

SAM: I'm liking it, too. But I'm a little worried about the broad who gets raped. What's her name, Connie? An art history professor? That's gonna put a crimp in the casting.

DAN: Not at all. Remember, I described Connie as "stunning and intelligent." In fact, when I get all the details worked out, she may turn out to be a descendant of Simonetta—and if I'm feeling bold, of Botticelli. That's why she understands. When she was growing up in a Dominican orphanage, the nuns made her pose for figure drawing classes. So some of her earliest memories are of shivering in a cold drafty classroom, stark naked, while everyone stared at her—not just the other girls, who hated her beauty, but also the nuns, including a couple of real bull dykes.

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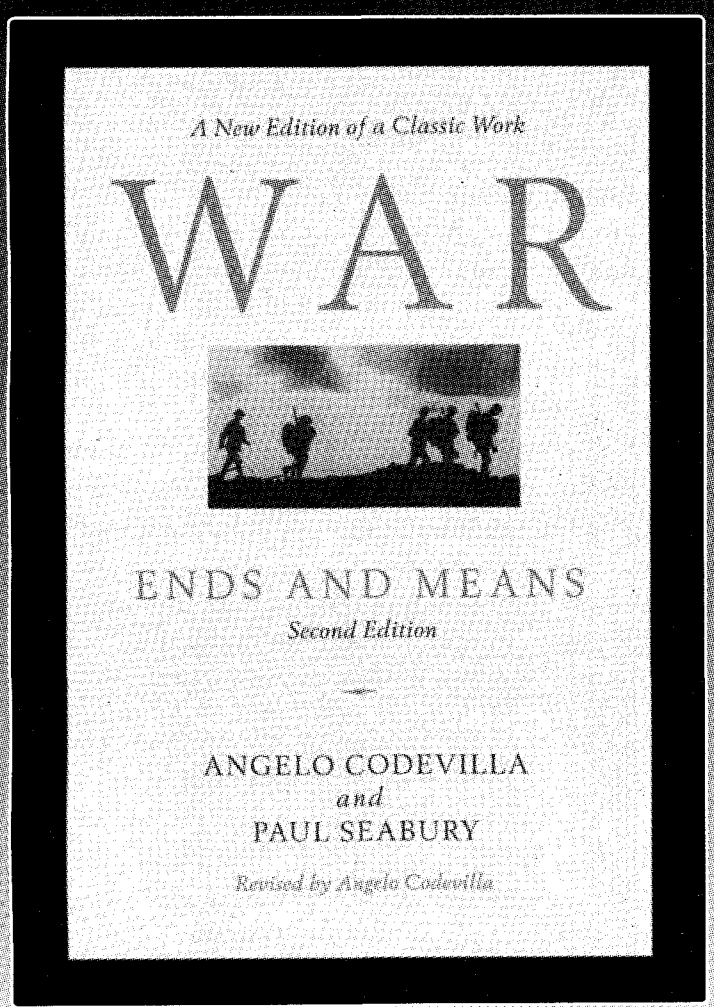

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SAM: Good, that could work. As long as she's not too young. You know lawyers.

DAN: Do I ever. No, I think that can be done tastefully—to establish Connie's character as a dynamic teacher who empowers female students. Kind of like Julia Roberts in *Mona Lisa Smile*. The contemporary plot, which will be action-packed, involves a struggle between Connie's students and the Georgetown administration over a production of *The Vagina Monologues*—you know, that play where women talk candidly about their, uh...

BIZZY: See? Even Dan can't say it! I did the play all four years at Smith. What an experience! So empowering!

SAM: Hmm. Not sure that will fly at the box office. Could we maybe fudge the details?

BIZZY: No problem. At most schools the play is part of "V-Day," which is devoted to raising awareness of violence against women. At the stricter Catholic schools, they allow the anti-violence activities but not the play (which *is* kind of raunchy).

ERNST: Well, we certainly don't want to make strict Catholics look good! The trick, Dan, will be to frame the conflict so that it looks as though *normal* women are being oppressed by the Church.

DAN: No problem. I'll background the play, and foreground the big event planned for Georgetown's V-Day: a keynote address by Connie, in which she reveals the hidden truth about Renaissance art, and explains why *The Birth of Venus* was not included in Savonarola's bonfire. Thanks to the Florentine art market, the painting soon became too valuable to burn, anyway. So it lives on today, complete with its botched drawing, as a reminder of the injustices that have killed literally trillions of women.

SAM: Very nice. But I'm still fuzzy on the rape. How does that fit? I'll be frank: I don't see a lot of box office in old Connie.

DAN: She's not old! And like I said, she's a knockout! Maybe we could even use the same actress to play her and Simonetta.

ERNST: I would discourage that. Why have just one pretty face when you can have two?

DAN: The point is, Connie's a framing device. We begin with the rape, then flash back to 15th-century Florence, where we witness the whole back-story, including Simonetta's stunted life, the founding of the Manfriars, and the destruction of Savonarola and Botticelli. Next we flash forward through the centuries, highlighting the Manfriars' more horrible deeds, and end up with the conspiracy to silence Connie. We show the rape as a political act, orchestrated by the province and the Florentine authorities, then accompany Connie back to Georgetown, where, deeply traumatized, she's on the verge of quitting—until, miraculously, her students appear and through their devotion to her message, start the healing process. On the big day, when the president of the university is about to announce the cancellation of the keynote speech, we see Connie, bruised but not broken, struggle to the podium and proclaim the truth to the world. Tears stream down thousands of fresh young faces, the music swells, and once again the camera pans the succulent body of Botticelli's Venus—only this time, it lingers on those sad, sad eyes.

BIZZY: Omigod, I can't stand it! Anyone got a Kleenex?

ERNST: Here, my dear. And they say the novel is dead!

SAM: Nice, Danny. Like the yadda-yadda at the end. Have your people call my people. Meanwhile I'm outta here. Lunch is getting cold.

Martha Bayles, who teaches humanities at Boston College, is the CRB*'s columnist on television and film. She is writing a book called* The Ugly Americans: Losing the Global Culture War.

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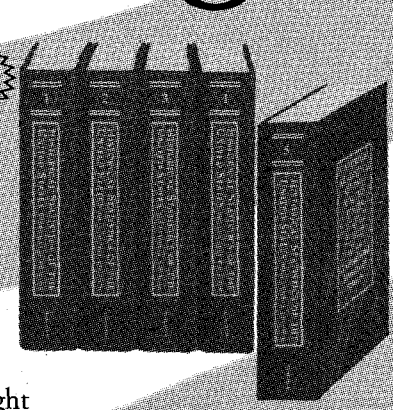

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Column:
PARTHIAN SHOT
by Mark Helprin

The Worst Generation Faces the Greatest Peril

An article in the July Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute, "Naval Quarantine," reviews the sharply divergent responses of several military commands during the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918. Both the captain of the USS *Pittsburgh*, and New Zealand's military governor of Western Samoa, refused to panic. The former gave his sailors leave in Rio de Janeiro despite the presence of the epidemic, and the latter allowed infected passengers to disembark from a steamer and go about their business. This was the common wisdom, and they did not defy it.

In contrast, the governor of American Samoa immediately instituted draconian quarantine, including house arrest, and, across the Pacific, the commander of the Goat Island Naval Station in San Francisco Bay instituted "absolute quarantine," and placed guards "at the docks with orders to shoot to kill anyone embarking or disembarking without authorization." Acting decisively before the appearance of even one case of influenza, these men risked ridicule, court-martial, and the destruction of their careers. In Samoa, Commander Poyer had moved upon only the ethereal and tenuous evidence of a static-filled short-wave broadcast. And imagine what would have ensued had the epidemic been of no account and the Goat Island sentries killed American sailors for the crime of stepping onto a U.S. Navy pier.

Today, our choices are analogous. We face a danger that approaches steadily from the far distance like a tsunami in slow motion. It will almost certainly strike in one form or another, it could strike tomorrow, it is as horrific in its potential as a general nuclear war, it is precedented in history, occurs in cycles, is favored at present as never before, and is capable of killing Americans by the scores of millions.

This is the prospect of infectious diseases emerging in catastrophic pandemics to which we are vulnerable more than in the lifetime of anyone now living. And yet we cannot tear ourselves away from the pressures of conformity and the distractions of prosperity to concentrate upon this mortal question, which should transcend partisanship, and does, in that all parties ignore it.

For while we have been complacent in assuming their subjugation, infectious diseases have been cannily evolving. The H5N1 Avian Flu pathogen, for example, is now especially virulent among birds and capable of human transmission. Through a process known as reassortment, it can meld with viruses specific to man, and from a host receptive to both types (such as a pig) emerge with its lethality intact and with the transmissibility of the common cold.

As H5N1 spreads universally it will find its opportunity. In China, for example, new wealth has dramatically increased the consumption of meat and keeping of livestock, while development has shrunk the habitat of wildfowl, which alight more and more among domestic flocks and herds. With or without the encouragement of bioterrorists, reassortment will occur, and although by natural processes lethality may decrease, it also may not.

The mortality of Avian Flu has been calculated on the basis of isolated cases, the subjects of attentive care, and reads far lower than it would in even the first stages of an epidemic, when the 30,000 or so respirators not in ordinary use in this country would be insufficient for hundreds of thousands of new patients, most of whom would be sent away from overwhelmed hospitals to die at home. Workers would desert their posts, rightly, for fear of infection, infrastructure would break down, food and power would become scarce, and conditions like those recently seen in New Orleans would envelop the entire country. Unlike in 1918, when 50-100 million people died worldwide and 500,000 in the U.S., we depend upon fragile interconnections. Modern transportation networks would spread the infection rapidly beyond containment; people are not even fractionally as self-reliant as they once were; and for Avian Flu nothing exists similar to the remnant immunity that in 1918 protected much of the population.

There is not yet a vaccine or cure (although GlaxoSmithKline has just made a very important advance), and nothing has been done to augment hospitals' ability to meet an event that by the consensus of competent authorities combines devastating lethality with a high probability of occurrence. This is because the people have become short-sighted, infantilized, and dependent, and politicians are afraid to lead, risk, or fail.

Were they not, they would press not for $7.1 billion, subsequently cut to $3.8 billion by the ever visionary Congress, but for $100 billion or more per year (roughly 2.5% of all government spending, or less than 1% of the GDP), to create a dozen centers to research immunity and the rapid manufacture of vaccines and curatives with which to respond to pathogens as they arise; to expand by an order of magnitude emergency treatment capacity in the form of modularized field hospitals; to double the output of nursing and medical schools; to promote the self-sufficiencies required for long quarantine; to unleash and encourage the great drug combines; and to quicken reaction to outbreaks here and abroad so as to lessen the chances that they will leap their cordons.

If the laws of supply and demand are not repealed, increasing the supply of medical care must lower its costs. And very great advances might come from desperately concentrated research. Still, liberals might recoil from yet another national security expenditure and the stimulation of private enterprise, conservatives from government involvement and subsidy, and everyone else from the necessity of projecting beyond the horizon of immediate want. Then someday, perhaps from a common grave, vast numbers of us will be able to weigh the consequences of preparing for what may never arise versus those of not preparing for what does. "The Greatest Generation" was not really extraordinary, it's just that ours is the worst, preoccupied above all by entertainment and self-searching, and, not surprisingly, unable to judge accurately or respond adequately to peril.

The captain of the *Pittsburgh* watched 663 of his 829-man crew take ill, and 58 die. He was lucky, for the governor of Western Samoa had to preside over more than 8,000 deaths, 22% of the population. But American Samoa, and Goat Island with its thousands of recruits, did not lose a single man, woman, or child. That is because Commander Poyer and his counterpart in San Francisco Bay had both courage and clarity of vision, which are precisely what we need at this moment, and precisely what we lack.

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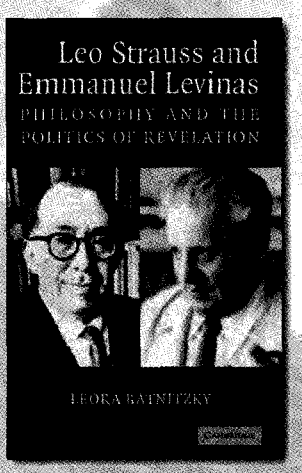

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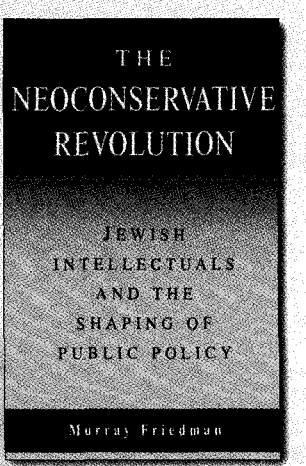

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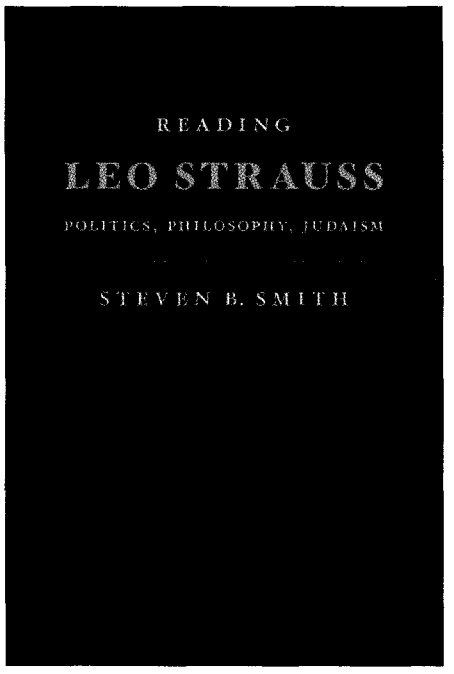

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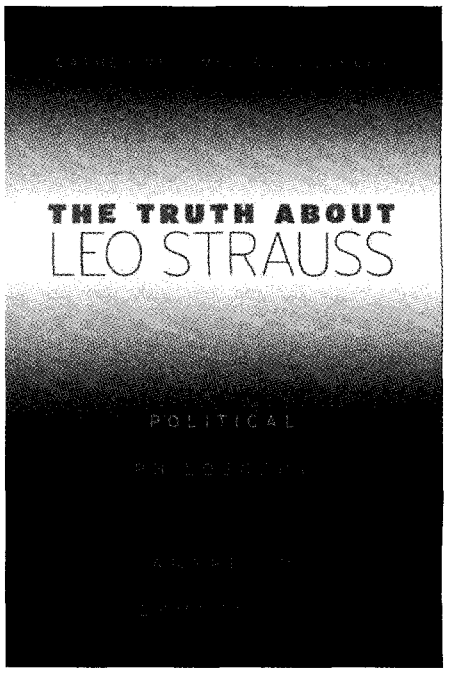

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Peter W. Schramm
"Born American, But in the Wrong Place"

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